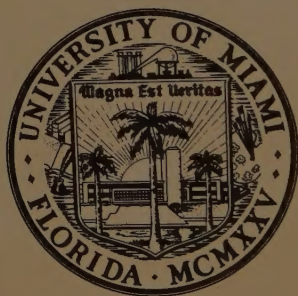


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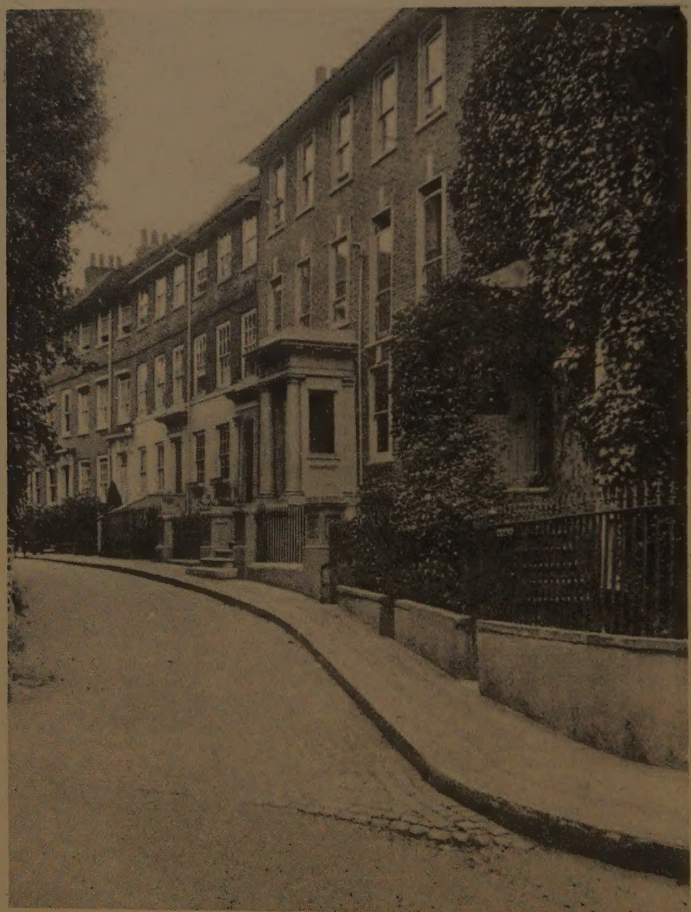
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GOSSIP ABOUT DR. JOHNSON
AND OTHERS



2, SION ROW, TWICKENHAM, 1926.
The house with a porch was Miss Hawkins' residence, 1793-1835.

GOSSIP ABOUT DR. JOHNSON AND OTHERS

BEING CHAPTERS FROM THE MEMOIRS OF
MISS LÆTITIA MATILDA HAWKINS

EDITED BY
FRANCIS HENRY SKRINE, F.R.Hist.S.

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WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION, 1741-48," ETC.

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PREFACE

MISS HAWKINS'S *Anecdotes*, which appeared in three volumes between 1822 and 1824, have become exceedingly scarce. My task as editor has been one of compression. After rearrangement and the excision of an intolerable amount of "padding" there emerges a residue of facts which reveal the social life of the eighteenth century and increase our knowledge of many great men who illustrated that wonderful era. My cordial thanks are due to the Rev. W. P. Cole Sheane, Vicar of Twickenham, who has enabled me to identify localities mentioned by Miss Hawkins, and to Mr. A. F. Sieveking, F.S.A., for the gift of an unpublished portrait of Voltaire.

FRANCIS H. SKRINE.

147, VICTORIA STREET,
LONDON, S.W. 1.

1926.

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INTRODUCTION

VICTORIANS were apt to belittle the eighteenth century and to pride themselves on possessing material advantages which were then unknown. Its events are now seen in their due perspective ; we realise that the roots of the present lie deeply embedded in the past and that the future must be the resultant of forces which had long been in operation. At its close the British Isles had sixteen million inhabitants, as compared with forty-eight millions in the present year of grace. Our ancestors, therefore, had ample scope for developing their personality, while in our day human forest-trees *in posse* are stifled by a dense growth of underwood. They had a sense of security which is lacking in these troublous

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times. Britannia then ruled the waves, her ships were seen in every sea, and her prestige stood enviably high. Hence the last half of the eighteenth century witnessed a wondrous efflorescence of genius. Literature and the fine arts reached a level which has never been surpassed ; domestic architecture and appliances exhibited an admirable sense of proportion and a degree of restraint which is the hall-mark of civilisation. In estimating our indebtedness to the eighteenth century, one is reminded of the myth which represented Pandora as showering good and evil gifts upon mankind. It was an epoch of invention and discovery. Watt compelled the giant force of steam to subserve human ends and Arkwright created the factory system. Thus did Great Industry arise, to besmirch the face of Nature, destroy the balance between urban and rural life, and favour the growth of a huge proletariat, with economic and political problems which defy solution. That fateful era, too, gave birth to sophisms which are still

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shaking the world. J. J. Rousseau's dictum, "Man is born good : civilisation has corrupted him," generated the French Revolution, Socialism and Anarchism. Adam Smith's theories, aptly summarised "Man's selfishness is God's Providence," tempted the Government of that day to neglect its bounden duty of protecting wage-earners against ruthless oppression.

Sir John Hawkins shone among the minor lights of the eighteenth century. He was born March 30, 1719, the son of an obscure surveyor of convivial habits. In early youth he followed his father's profession, but was afterwards articled to a miserly attorney named Scott. On his release from painful servitude he became an assistant to Peter Storer, who was a rich conveyancer residing at Highgate ; and evidently discovered that the secret of success in business is to make one's self indispensable. He won Storer's lasting friendship, and in 1753 married his younger daughter, Sydney by name, with a portion of £10,000. Six years later she inherited from her brother,

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Peter Storer the second, real property in Middlesex yielding an income of £1,000. The young couple had set up house in Hatton Street, Holborn, which was then a favourite residential quarter ; and in 1761 Hawkins bought the freehold of Twickenham House, which stood on the south side of the Common, but has long since disappeared. It contained a circular concert-room, with domed ceiling, and in the grounds Hawkins built another room to serve as the headquarters of his Musical Club. One of the garden fences was formed of sword-blades, which, according to tradition, had been found on Drum Mossie Muir after the battle of Culloden. In 1761 he was placed on the Magisterial Commission for Middlesex, and four years later the vigour he had shown in suppressing riots led to his election as Chairman of Quarter Sessions. He sold Twickenham House after his father's death in 1771, and in the year following he was presented to George III by the Secretary of State as " the best Magistrate in the Kingdom " ; receiving

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the richly-deserved honour of Knighthood. The War of American Independence was marked by a serious outbreak of crime, with which the miserable police-force of that day was utterly unable to cope. Driven from Hatton Street by repeated burglaries, Sir John Hawkins migrated to Queen Square, Westminster ; and after losing his valuable library by fire he found a final retreat in Broad Sanctuary, a region of ancient houses northwest of Westminster Abbey. Here he died of apoplexy, May 21, 1789, and lies buried in the Abbey Cloisters.

Hawkins possessed untiring industry and a taste for the fine arts. He joined the Society of Ancient Music, and acquired a collection of rare compositions brought together by J. C. Pepusch (1667-1752). He also dabbled in literature, and wrote for Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine*. He was a keen fly-fisherman, and in 1761 published an edition of Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler*, which was thrice reprinted during his lifetime. In 1776 appeared his

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General History of the Science and Practice of Music, which rescued many ancient pieces from oblivion. But Hawkins had no literary gifts, and his work suffered a temporary eclipse from Dr. Charles Burney's *History of Music*, the first volume of which appeared in the same year. His work, however, possessed greater permanent value, and a new edition was published as recently as 1874.

Hawkins's only title to immortality arises from his long connection with Dr. Samuel Johnson. It began at St. John's Gate, the headquarters of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and ripened into an enduring friendship. He was an original member of the famous Literary Club, which Johnson founded at the Turk's Head, Soho, in 1763; and the "Great Cham of Literature" was a frequent guest at Hawkins's house until his long claustration at Streatham. Hawkins drew his friend's will, and conscientiously carried out its provisions as executor. Soon after Johnson's death a group of London booksellers invited Hawkins to become his

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biographer ; and in 1788-89 they published his *Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson*, with a carelessly-edited reprint of the great writer's works in five volumes. It is couched in pompous but feeble language, and his daughter admits that it was "the worst thing he ever did." By a second stroke of ill-luck it was completely superseded by Boswell's immortal work, which took the British world by storm in 1791. The rival biographers cordially detested one another, and Boswell's references to Hawkins are almost uniformly disparaging. But it would be as unfair to view the lesser man through Boswell's spectacles as to accept Livy's scathing depreciation of the Carthaginian character. The epithet "unclubbable," which clings limpet-like to his memory, originated, according to Dr. Burney, in Hawkins's refusal to pay the supper-score, inasmuch as he never supped at home ; and Boswell asserts that he seceded from the Literary Club in consequence of the members' marked disapproval of his behaviour towards Edmund Burke. In

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discussing him with Miss Burney, Johnson said, " He was an honest man at bottom, but it must be owned that he had a degree of brutality and a tendency to savageness which cannot easily be defended " (*Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay*, p. 65). His daughter depicts him in a far more favourable light. That he was capable of extreme generosity was proved by his renunciation of a large income which Peter Storer the second intended bequeathing to Mrs. Hawkins, and by his gift of a splendid collection of antique music to the British Museum. Making due allowance for prejudice on both sides, we may fairly credit Hawkins with great strength of character and fearlessness in performing the duties of an onerous post. He was fully alive to the power of the purse ; what with his devoted wife's fortune and the emoluments of his office, he enjoyed an income of £3,000, equivalent to £7,000 at the present day. He lived sumptuously, but was always eager to share the good things of life with friends. Like John Forster,

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the biographer of Dickens, he was a "Harbitrary gent," and something of a snob to boot. But *noscitur a sociis* applied to this much-maligned man; one who was honoured by the friendship of Johnson, Reynolds, Garrick and Horace Walpole must have had other recommendations than wealth and a love of hospitality.

He left three children. His eldest son, John Sidney Hawkins (1758-1842) was an antiquarian writer of some note, but cursed with a jealous and quarrelsome temper which severed him from society. Another son, named Henry Hawkins (1762-1841), practised as a barrister; he appears to have been pompous, pedantic and a bore of the first water.

Hawkins's daughter was born in 1760 and christened Lætitia Matilda. She has not secured a niche in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and what little we know of her uneventful life is derived from the self-revelations of her published writings. They prove her to have been an acidulous old maid, with

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formal manners, a warm heart and a great capacity for friendship. She shared in the sports and studies of her brothers until they were sent to Charterhouse School ; was strictly brought up, and consistently snubbed by her father who kept her hard at work as his amanuensis. After Lady Hawkins's death in 1793, Lætitia returned to Twickenham and settled down with her bachelor brother Henry at No. 2 in a delightful group of early Georgian residences known as Sion Row. Their house is by far the largest in the Terrace, and contains several noble rooms. It has been modernised to a certain extent ; iron railings replace a low area wall, and the windows are filled with plate-glass. Otherwise the house and its riverside surroundings remain much as they were a century ago.

Miss Hawkins was an acute observer, and kept notes of the conversation of the eminent people whom she met at her father's house. In 1806 she struck up a close friendship with an *émigré* named Count Jarnac, who gave

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her much curious information regarding Court life under the *ancien régime*. Fourteen years later she made the acquaintance of Mr. Samuel Tolfrey, who belonged to a well-known Anglo-Indian family and who settled in Montpelier Row, Twickenham. At his instigation she published a volume of reminiscences in 1822 under the title, *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches and Memoirs*. It appeared during a somewhat jejune epoch in our literature, and made some sensation in a public with whom the memory of Georgian giants was still fresh. Encouraged by the success of her first important venture, she issued two more volumes in 1824 entitled, *Memoirs, Anecdotes, Facts and Opinions collected and preserved by Lætitia Matilda Hawkins*. The author had few if any qualifications for the supremely difficult art of biography. Her books are very ill-arranged, needless digressions abound, and the amount of "padding" is intolerable. But, despite their glaring defects, of which she was fully conscious, they shed a flood of light on an era pregnant with

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great events, and richly repay the labour involved in winnowing their wheat from chaff.

We obtain a glimpse of her last days from Cooke and Hoffland's *Richmond and its Surrounding Scenery*, which appeared in 1832. They wrote, p. 44 :

“ Sir John Hawkins's daughter (still resident at Twickenham) is known by her admirable works of imagination ; her classical acquirements and her conversational talents may be said to have surpassed her father's fame.”

A subsequent writer is less complimentary. At page 84, Chapman's *Architectural Remains of Old Richmond, etc.*, we read :

“ Miss Hawkins became the occupant of Number 2 Sion Row, in company with her brother Henry (who was named on account of his considerable attainments, ‘ Classic Harry ’) and a companion, Miss Mary Mitchell. They formed, says Cobbett (*Memorials of Twickenham*, 1872) as grotesque a trio as can be imagined. Miss Hawkins published

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a number of novels which have passed into oblivion, but her three volumes of *Anecdotes* still possess much interest."

The date of her death is thus recorded by an obscure tablet on the wall of Twickenham Parish Church :

"To the Memory of Henry Hawkins Esquire who departed this life April 18th 1841 in the 80th year of his age ; and also of his sister Lætitia Matilda Hawkins who died on the 22nd November 1835, aged 75."

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD

CHAPTER I

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD

Glimpses of distinguished men—Goldsmith, Johnson.—

Sir John Hawkins vindicated against Boswell's misrepresentations.—He was articled to an attorney; employed by a rich conveyancer, whose daughter he married; edited Walton's *Compleat Angler*; became a Magistrate for Middlesex; his tact in dealing with rioters; prosecuted a brutal stage-coachman.—Lady Hawkins during girlhood witnessed episodes of the "Forty-Five"; her disinterestedness; inherited a landed estate from her only brother.—Musical parties; the home of a wealthy London merchant.—Lady Hawkins's patience and good humour.

I HAVE always felt a sort of Hibernian regret that I was not born younger. The feeling may be construed into something less absurd if I describe it as arising from recollections of my father's society at a time when I was incapable of appreciating the conversation I heard at his table. Although

my brothers and I went into the dining-room only with the almonds and raisins, the then existing custom of allowing children to sit on the drawing-room carpet until dinner was announced gave me an opportunity of seeing persons of whose eminence I was unaware. We were well-disciplined children, and taught to be very respectful to our seniors ; but I little thought that I should live to boast of Goldsmith's showing me how to play Jack and Jill with two bits of paper on his fingers. I cannot brag of any notice bestowed on me by Sir Joshua Reynolds ; but Dr. Johnson fondled me in his peculiar way—that is to say, he kept me standing before the fire while he leant his wig on my shoulder, and when he recollected me he would ask whether I should like to be his little housekeeper. It was luckily not necessary to reply. Without pretending to any order in details, I will mention persons and facts as they arise in my mind. The reader may wish to know the sources of the information I am about to offer : I will gratify his

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD

curiosity by naming a few of my father's friends. A complete list would include many of the first characters of the age ; but I may specify Horace Walpole,* Hawkesworth,† Dr. Hurd,‡ David Garrick, and Bennet Langton.

I must protest against two statements made in Mr. Boswell's erroneous biography—that my father was the son of a carpenter and married an old woman for her money. He was for many years a prime favourite with Mr. Peter Storer of Highgate, an eminent barrister, who cast about him for a young man able to assist him in conveyancing, and found exactly what he wanted in John Hawkins. Thus a firm friendship was established between them, and Mr. Storer often expressed regret that he had not known my father earlier. The latter became equally intimate with Mr. Peter Storer Junior, a Middlesex gentleman with an income of about £2,000 a year, who thought that his

* Horace Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford (1717-97).

† J. Hawkesworth (1715-73), a friend and imitator of Johnson.

‡ R. Hurd, Bishop of Worcester (1720-1808), a great favourite with George III.

younger sister, aged 26, and her portion of £10,000 would be well bestowed on his friend ; and so ends the story of the “ rich old woman married for her money ” invented by James Boswell of Auchinleck, Esquire ! Now as to the carpenter’s son fiction. John Hawkins’s father was an architect and surveyor, but never attained eminence in either profession, being, I have heard, fonder of conviviality than of planning and plotting. That he had a generous disposition is proved by the fact that he lent large sums of money to associates without interest and—still worse for his children—without security. Had he possessed common prudence he would have done better for his son than to article him thus to a miserly old attorney named Scott, who lived in the heart of the City. My father, however, made the best use of his indentures under a man to whose professional skill he always bore testimony, though I have known him to writhe on recollecting the sufferings he endured under his master’s roof. Scott died an obscure attorney ; his apprentice

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD

became head of the Commission of Peace for Middlesex ; and Scott often had to attend his Court. When the Earl of Rochford, Secretary of State, presented my father to his late Majesty for the honour of Knighthood, he described him as “ the best Magistrate in the Kingdom.” On his emancipation, my father’s love of music gave him many profitable and agreeable friendships. He became intimate with Mr. Caslon, who was an unrivalled type-founder,* and Mr. Stanley,† a blind musician of extraordinary talent, at whose request he wrote eleven cantatas which Stanley set to music. His father’s house proving inconvenient for his growing business, John Hawkins set up housekeeping with a “ chum ”—I believe this is a College term—named Munckley, a young physician just starting in the Metropolis. The latter’s name has long passed into oblivion, but his figure is immortalised in Hogarth’s

* William Caslon (1692–1766) set up shop in London, 1716. His son, also William, carried on his father’s business, and died 1778.

† John Stanley (1714–1786), composer and organist, conducted the King’s Band, 1782.

Warwick Lane, where the reader may find him depicted as the fattest of the comic crew. Moreover, the blank in this well-known distich may be filled up with his name :

When —— walks the streets the pavours cry
 “God bless you, Sir,” and lay their rammers by.

My mother, who knew Munckley well, told me that at a time when it was the fashion for gentlemen to dress with a great display of fine linen, the widest make, which was Hollands five quarters wide, seemed a tight fit on his portly person. The reader must now realise my father as residing alternately in London and at Twickenham and indulging his taste for music and literature. He was an enthusiastic lover of fly-fishing, and prided himself on being able to cast a line fourteen yards long. It was this passion which led him to publish an enlarged edition of Izaak Walton’s *Compleat Angler*, which has been a general favourite ever since I can remember and which, while my father lived, added to my toil as his amanuensis owing to the frequent demand for

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new editions. I must confess that my labour was sweetened by the charm of this incomparable book, though I was not only an ignoramus, but had a decided aversion to this form of sport.

“ I would make so many enemies ! ” is the common excuse for failing to act with vigour as a magistrate. I have lived to hear my father’s death regretted and to see the evils that crept in when his firm influence was removed. He had occasion to display this quality during the Seamen’s Riots. In pursuance of his duty he went to expostulate with the malcontents who had assembled at Moorfields, where the stones of London’s ancient pavement lay in piles, offering weapons for an attack on the forces of order. My father had a commanding presence, and his voice was toned to compel attention. Hardly had he uttered a few words than the rioters’ ringleader shouted, “ Let’s hear what the gentleman has to say ! ” and he was soon surrounded by sailors armed with bludgeons, who became

protectors instead of assailants. But he did not face the mob alone ; peace officers gathered round him, nor were his brethren in the Commission of the Peace wanting. It must be admitted that they were a sorry set of men. One of my father's colleagues was a bricklayer at the east end of the town, where "Justices" were by prescription recruited from the dregs of society ; he never wrote more than the first two letters of his Christian name, having doubts in his mind regarding the others. Another justice was persistent in urging his claims to gentility, and dubbed himself "Esquire" on the strength of being a prize-winner in His Majesty's Lottery. Sir John Hawkins did all in his power to keep the Commission "pure," as he used to say ; but his efforts were in vain, and I could not help regretting that he did not resign office on the first failure of well-justified remonstrance.

While he was driving with Lady Hawkins from Twickenham to London, their lives were

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD

endangered by the brutality of a stage-coachman, who drove his heavily-laden vehicle against my father's chariot with such violence as to bend the wheel-iron and wrench a door-handle off. On our coachman's remonstrating, he was silenced by gross abuse and slashed across the face by the ruffian's whip. Some bystanders, indignant at the outrage, gave my father his assailant's name and that of the coach-office to which he belonged, adding that he was "a nuisance on the road." Sir John was about the last person to bear such treatment tamely. He declared that he would spare neither time nor expense to make an example of the culprit. The latter, on getting wind of the danger in which he stood, kept out of sight for a time and hired another man to drive his coach. But my father rightly surmised that his enemy would return to his old haunts as soon as the hue and cry subsided. So he kept Lord Mansfield's tipstaves on the watch, one of whom saw the delinquent enter the White Horse kitchen, where some other fellows of

his kidney were assembled. Following him inside, he heard him glorying in his heroic deed, and particularly dwelling on the punishment he had given to Sir John's coachman. Ample evidence was now forthcoming : the man was beckoned outside and securely handcuffed. In due course he was haled before the Quarter Sessions, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment in Newgate. Will it be credited that my father was assailed on all sides by petitions and letters charging him with cruelty ? One correspondent, indeed, pointed out that the poor man would lose his Christmas gratuities if the sentence was carried out !

My maternal grandparents lived on the summit of Highgate Hill, and the great North Road passed behind their house. My mother being about nineteen when the Young Pretender made his desperate bid for the Crown, was old enough to take the deepest interest in the vicissitudes of so important a contest. She used to describe her father, who was a zealous Whig, as plunged in dejection when matters

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were approaching their crisis, and well remembered his burying two hundred guineas in the garden. She could call up the animated scenes when the Guards marched towards Finchley Common, and the train of sumpter-mules carrying the Duke of Cumberland's baggage. She was not allowed to see the newspapers, but a young man staying in the house, who had a *tendresse* for her, used to read them to her parents. So she listened at the door, and laid injunctions on the reader to make himself distinctly heard. On thus learning that the rebel army had reached Derby, she fainted and fell on the floor ! The dreadful suspense which affected the nation before Culloden must have been attended in many cases by proportionate curiosity. That this was so with my mother was proved by her lively descriptions of the conveyance through Highgate of the "Rebel Lords," as they were called. Tender-hearted as she was, either her zealous loyalty or the sense of dangers escaped proved stronger than her recollection of the Apostle's injunction to

be pitiful. She saw Lord Lovat stop to take refreshment on his last journey ; and as his carriage was thrown open, she could bear testimony to the fidelity of Hogarth's well-known portrait, but she felt no compassion for a man who was merciless to his own kith and kin.

My mother's only brother, Peter Storer, was a man whose memory is still held in sweet remembrance in Northern Middlesex, where he owned considerable copyhold property. A landowner with an unincumbered income of £2,000 could in those days keep six carriage-horses and live in a proportionate style without suffering the slightest accumulation of debt ; consequently Mr. Storer died a rich man. My mother had always been his favourite sister ; she was endeared to him by her lively temper and handsome person, together with the sympathy he showed when she was treated unkindly by her father because, forsooth, she did not come into the world a boy ! There was an elder sister, but she had offended Mr. Storer by her ill-governed tongue and

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD

temper. He, therefore, by a will drawn without consulting my parents, bequeathed only £500 to this sister, and the rest of his property—which mostly lay within twenty miles of London—to my dear mother. Having done this, he deposited his will with my father, explaining that his elder sister had given him mortal offence. My parents were indefatigable in representing the injustice of this disposition, and succeeded in inducing Mr. Storer to execute a fresh will which bequeathed his property to both sisters in equal shares. My parents lost more than £1,000 a year by their unselfishness, but our gain is inestimable ; we can ride through a manor gone from us and fields not our own with feelings of exultation.

Sir John Hawkins used to give fortnightly musical parties at our house, where amateurs received a hearty welcome from my mother who shared her husband's tastes and love of hospitality. I have heard her say of a highly-esteemed singer, " Ah, I have boxed his ears many a time for poking the fire between the

acts !” I recollect this particularly of Reinhold, who seemed to have been the greatest sinner in this respect.* When these entertainments were given up as being incompatible with literary and official work, they were succeeded by casual invitations, which produced many in return. My father was always an honoured guest at the house of Mr. James Mathias, a merchant of great opulence who lived in Warnford Court, Throgmorton Street. There it was that I learnt to appreciate the commercial importance of our country. The entrance hall was spacious, and the room in which the gentlemen supped astonished me by its array of decanters and a set of silver candlesticks in the best taste I ever saw, which would even now be approved of. Few people know what City mansions are, for every situation is despised except the hem and fringe of the Metropolis. We build on a hot and gravelly

* C. F. Reinhold (1737-1815), son of Thomas Reinhold, who created the principal parts in Handel's Oratorios ; was chorister in the Chapel Royal, and sang in Marylebone Gardens from 1759 onwards.

soil which is supposed to be cool, whereas the summer is less felt in high houses and narrow lanes. The Italians have long been aware of this, or Genoa and Florence would not be what they are.

If Lady Hawkins was inclined to take an airing, she would drive in the carriage when it went to fetch Sir John home from some friend's house ; and he was always glad of her company. She never showed impatience at being kept waiting, nor did she allow a hint to be given him that his carriage was at the door. I have sat with her till past eleven o'clock at Dr. Boyce's gate in Kensington Gore.* My mother only laughed when he at last appeared, and listened to his account of what had happened ; but the next time he called out from one room to another, " My dear, have you a mind for a ride this evening ? " she answered laughingly, " Yes, but not to Dr. Boyce's, if you please ! "

* Dr. William Boyce (1710-79), master of the King's Band, and organist in the Chapel Royal, a prolific composer, and author of " Hearts of Oak."

TWICKENHAM NEIGHBOURS

1760-71

CHAPTER II

TWICKENHAM NEIGHBOURS, 1760-71

Sir Samuel and Lady Prime.—Marchioness of Tweeddale, her daughters and the young Marquis.—Lady Mary Wortley Montague and Pope ; Kitty Clive.—Horace Walpole, origin and defects of Strawberry Hill, his dress and appearance, tact, kindness of heart, respect for morality.—Lady Diana Beauclerk ; Walpole and Chatterton.

TWICKENHAM had lost its title “ Classic ” when my father bought a house there in 1760 ; but it was still the abode of many distinguished people. Amongst our neighbours Sir Samuel Prime stood conspicuous. He lived in the hamlet of Whitton, in a mansion built by Sir Godfrey Kneller for his own occupation.* He wore a

* Kneller Hall, built 1709-11 by Sir Godfrey for his own residence, had painted ceilings by Laguerre. It has been almost entirely rebuilt, and is now a school of military music.

voluminous wig of the palest flaxen colour, which set off his blooming complexion. His frame was on a large scale, but without any tendency to corpulence ; his features were commanding, and his voice extremely sonorous. He must have been a beau at one time, for the nice disposition of his cravat and ruffles, the exactness with which his stockings kept their place in the obsolete form of "roll-ups," and the *tout ensemble* of his costume seemed the work of a sculptor rather than of a valet. Everything he wore was perfumed to a degree which would be insupportable at the present day. I must now sketch Lady Prime. There are portraits which prove that she had been what was called a "prodigiously fine woman," and her remains were on an imposing scale, tempered to the observer by evidence of good nature. Her first husband was a Suffolk squire of large property, and I heard her speak with as much melancholy as her buoyant spirits admitted of the years when she inhabited the large but now dilapidated mansion of Thwaite

Hall. Lady Prime used to talk with relish of the one-o'clock dinners and the nine-o'clock suppers of her youthful days, which made me ask what difference, except in name, there was between these meals and our substantial noonings and late dinners. She belonged to a generation which denied education to women ; and she was not active when I knew her nor had she habits of application, but what came in her way she observed, and would have astonished any gardener by her knowledge of fruit-growing.

I will next notice a more familiar neighbour in the person of the widowed Marchioness of Tweeddale. Her house lay on the extreme left of Twickenham Common ; it was a large and handsome villa approached by a lofty flight of steps. She had been Lady Frances Carteret, daughter of Earl Granville,* and was brought up by a Jacobite aunt, Lady Worsley. She told my father that on her aunt's upbraiding

* John Carteret, first Earl Granville (1690-1763), Secretary of State and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1724-30.

her as a child for not attending prayers, she answered pertly that she had heard that her ladyship did not pray for the King. "Who says that?" asked Lady Worsley; "I would have you and those who sent you know that I *do* pray for the King, but I do not think it necessary to tell the Almighty *who* is King!" I have heard it said that Lady Tweeddale worried her gouty lord to death; if that was so it must have been with the best intentions in the world, for his memory was very dear to her, and the rooms he used in their town house in Upper Grosvenor Street never had the light of day let into them. Nor had she ever been to Court, although messages of condescending inquiry had often given her hints to pay her duty there. Her ladyship's manners towards my family were of a different kind; she paid the management of us children a high compliment by encouraging an intimacy between her only son and my brothers. When the time arrived for the latter to be sent to Charterhouse School, the Marchioness vigorously objected,

and suggested that they should be educated under the young Marquis's private tutor rather than face the hardships of a public school. On my mother's declining the favour Lady Tweeddale said with some asperity, "Well, I thought you loved your children!" "I do love them," said my mother, "and therefore I part with them." The Marchioness's daughters, Ladies Grace and Catherine Hay, had portions of £2,000 only; and my gowns, although as plain as possible, were deemed too expensive for their wear. Their mother often said that they must marry "blue blood," and they were duly sensible of its value. These young ladies were tormentors who finished what their mama had begun: an instance will speak for itself. At one time Lady Tweeddale got a notion into her fanciful head that I was growing up awry; in order to convince her that she was wrong, my mother allowed me to be undressed in her bedroom, after which I was sent to the nursery to be "made decent." Thither the Ladies Hay followed me, and there

they made me unload my pocket—a pocket being in those days the ambition of every girl who desired to appear “womanly.” All my humble treasures were examined, and a selection of them made, half in earnest and half in play. I dare say that people of high rank consider this sort of thing a joke, but it was grievous to a girl who felt her inferiority ; consequently I was not fond of the Ladies Hay.

But I gazed with admiration on the young Marquis of Tweeddale. He was indeed a lovely, blooming boy, having inherited his mother’s fine complexion, with a profusion of golden hair which, in the fashion of those days, was allowed to curl as luxuriantly as nature bade it. His throat was dressed open, as was usual for young boys ; and very fine lace decorated his linen which, in a spirit of warm patriotism, he would not wear without being first assured that it was of Scotch manufacture. His dress was commonly a scarlet coat, nankeen small-clothes, white silk stockings, and shoes

with gold buckles. But his gorgeous attire did not forbid him to be as active as any boy could be. No good can come from assimilating the dress of a peer with that of a butcher's son simply because they have the same inclination for boyish sports ; and difference of rank should always be preserved in costume. It might be inferred that the young Marquis was a spoilt child ; but he was never free from his mother's control. For instance, we children were once playing cricket on our lawn while her ladyship sat with Sir John and Lady Hawkins in the portico which commanded it. The Marchioness, with eyes directed in one way and ears in another, suddenly called out, " My lord, come in ; I say, come in directly ! You will run till you overheat yourself, and then you will catch scarlet fever ! " The lad threw down his bat in a passion and put on his coat with vexed obedience, to be met by a lecture on all the ills that flesh is heir to. Control must have been very grievous to his fiery spirit ; he was proud, but with a grace which made his

right to be so unquestionable. Our manservant was sent one evening to fetch my brothers who were at play with him. "Come, sir," the man said, addressing Lord Tweeddale, "my young gentlemen must go!" He turned briskly, and surveying his interlocutor from head to foot, exclaimed, "Sir, do you know I am a lord?" Yet he encouraged my brothers to call him "George Hay," in order, as he said, to save trouble. Now, what availed his mother's excessive anxiety about his health; could he have fared worse had he taken the chances of a public school? He was thrown from his Shetland pony, and dragged in the stirrup while riding at foot's pace on Twickenham Common, the coachman leading his little horse, the tutor walking by his side, a footman at each stirrup, and the butler following! At another time he was dragged into a piece of water by a roller which he insisted on pulling despite the gardener's remonstrances. And this lovely boy did not escape an early death; at fourteen he was borne to his

ancestor's vault in the North, a victim to measles !

The house nearest to our own in the village had been the residence of Lady Mary Wortley Montague. My father recollected a tradition that the well-known quarrel or coolness between her ladyship and the poet Pope originated in the return of a pair of borrowed sheets, unwashed.

I believe that the comic actress, Mrs. Clive,* paid rent for her house called " Little Strawberry Hill " by her agreeable or rather diverting conversation. Her memory still lingers in Twickenham : and her bounty to indigent relations is recorded on her monument in our churchyard in lines which are far from contemptible, and which I have heard were the work of an actress named Mrs. Pope. A virtue less known and less easily credited in

* Catherine Clive (1711-85) came of a good Irish family. Her vigorous genius and sense of humour compensated for a very defective education. She became Garrick's leading lady at Drury Lane ; was greatly admired by Johnson and by Walpole, who gave her Little Strawberry Hill as a residence.

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Mrs. Clive was her complete abstinence from spirituous liquors ; she told a neighbour in Great Queen Street, from whom I heard it, that she could say more than most players, inasmuch as she kept none of these exhilarating beverages in her house. I have also heard that she gave a pass to one of her maids who wished to see her act ; and that, when the girl was asked how she liked her mistress on the stage she replied, “ Why, I saw no difference in her there and at home ! ” Mrs. Clive came one evening to call, but on my mother’s running out to prevent her alighting from her carriage—for smallpox was suspected in our establishment and Lady Hawkins knew that Mrs. Clive had not had the disease—oblivious of my mother’s polite attention at a time of such anxiety, Mrs. Clive said roughly, “ It was not you I wanted to see, but your husband : send him out ! ” I remember a reception of the same sort which she gave to two Surveyors of parish roads, sent by my father to demand some payment which she had refused to make.

She exclaimed, "By the living God I will not pay it!" I suppose it was in order to show what an actress could do that Mrs. Clive worked a carpet with blue tulips and yellow foliage for the Holbein Chamber in Strawberry Hill.

The bauble villa which Horace Walpole made world-famous was fashioned out of three tenements. I will not be hard on his memory, since he was amply punished for his crazy bargain and his folly in patching up an edifice that was anything but habitable. I wonder he was not disgusted with a thing so childish and so liable to injury as Strawberry Hill. Its external embellishment provoked the wanton malice of the lower classes who, as regularly as new pinnacles were added to the sham Gothic entrance, broke them off! He bore these outrages with exemplary patience, admitting that he deserved them by indulging his fantastic taste. Having thus introduced Mr. Walpole, I will now say more about that remarkable man. I knew him well, and my

recollection of his society is so pleasant that I must raise my voice in protest against the contempt that has been poured on his memory. His figure was tall and slender to excess ; his complexion showed an unhealthy pallor ; his eyes were remarkably dark and penetrating ; his voice was not strong but had very pleasant tones. He always came into a room in a style of affected delicacy which fashion before 1772 made almost natural—*chapeau-bras* under his arm, or compressed between his hands, knees bent and feet on tiptoe as if he were afraid of a wet floor. His summer dress in visiting was a lavender suit, the waistcoat embroidered with silver or tambour-work, ruffles and jabot of lace, partridge silk stockings, and gold buckles to his shoes. He wore no powder, and his wig was combed straight, showing a pale, smooth forehead. As may be inferred from his published letters Mr. Walpole's conversation was very brilliant. We were licensed visitors to Strawberry Hill ; and one afternoon my mother, who was being conducted round

the house by its owner, was surprised to see two pictures which had belonged to her brother hanging on the wall. Mr. Walpole pressed her to accept them as presents ; but she gratefully declined the offer and burst into tears, recollecting where she used to see them. Nothing further was said at the time ; but the pictures were not on view when she next visited Strawberry Hill. I have heard Mr. Walpole accused of wanting hospitality ; but a man who condemned himself to monkish abstemiousness could not be expected to keep open house. It appears from his correspondence that Strawberry Hill was a great resort for visitors, and I am much mistaken if his servants were not kept on board-wages ; the report was probably spread by some one who was disappointed of a dinner. Mr. Walpole's filial piety was very marked : he used to talk of Sir Robert Walpole a good deal, and told Sir John Hawkins that he was called to his father's sick-bed, when the great statesman warned him that he " would live to see the

Crown of England fought for on English ground.” * It is not generally known that Mr. Walpole was an elegant artist, but I have no evidence of his proficiency except a small head at Strawberry Hill. He was a great admirer of Lady Diana Beauclerk’s talent,† regarding which I may say that it might have remained undisputed had her ladyship been content with attempting portraits of her daughters or wooded landscapes with gipsies. But admiration ended when the “Beauclerk Closet,” as it was ostentatiously called, was allowed to be seen—unless the proportions of the human figure are of no importance in drawing. On a sad catastrophe occurring in Mr. Walpole’s family, he wrote to my father conjuring him to keep his sons away from dissipated society ; and the tone of his letter

* Sir Robert Walpole died 1745, on the eve of Charles Edward Stuart’s invasion.

† Lady Diana Beauclerk (1734–1808), eldest daughter of the second Duke of Marlborough ; after being divorced by Viscount Bolingbroke she married Topham Beauclerk, who belonged to the Johnson circle. She was a painter of some distinction, and illustrated Dryden’s *Fables*.

was by no means that of a man who regarded deviations from morality with indulgence. Another proof of Mr. Walpole's principles was given by his reprobation of Wilkes's * shamelessness when they met in Paris. The bitter repentance and contrition he felt on account of his estrangement from the poet Gray show what he was as a friend. He was loved by all his servants, and any sudden change in the Strawberry Hill *ménage* would have caused wonder in Twickenham. Mr. Walpole began to lose public favour when he detected Chatterton's impositions † ; but I feel sure that, if that wild genius had only shown him what he could do, and asked for £20 he would have obtained it. He made no scruple of avowing his dislike of *Don Quixote*, and, I think, of *Hudibras*. It was Mr. Walpole who suggested the *History of Music* to my

* John Wilkes (1727-97), demagogue. Lord Mayor of London, 1774.

† Thomas Chatterton, b. 1752, a young poet, submitted specimens of his work to Walpole, who did not return them ; took his own life 1770.

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father, who, it must be admitted, regarded him as somewhat frivolous. But my friend was capable of gravity when it was called for ; he spoke seriously of his approaching death, and bore his sufferings with stoical fortitude.

A TWICKENHAM NEIGHBOUR:
DAVID GARRICK

CHAPTER III

A TWICKENHAM NEIGHBOUR, DAVID GARRICK

David Garrick's costume, mobile features and intense energy ; a local magnate ; his vanity ; freedom from snobbery ; perfect relations with Mrs. Garrick ; his anger excited by false reports to the contrary. Anecdotes of his charming wife ; his incapacity for real emotion ; his tremendous ardour as projector of the Stratford Jubilee, 1769 ; it failed to attract the public, but succeeded when turned into a farce at Drury Lane ; Garrick's sensitiveness as to his height.

DAVID GARRICK was our neighbour and friend at Twickenham.* I see him now, dressed in a dark-blue coat, its buttonholes bound with gold, a small cocked hat, also gold-laced, a very open waistcoat, and a countenance never at rest. In the

* David Garrick (1717-79), Johnson's pupil ; styled "the English Roscius" ; married, 1749, Eva Maria Violette, who died 1822. His famous riverside villa at Hampton was four miles from Twickenham.

country he indulged his natural volubility, and he was always at ease with my father. He might be sitting at a table indoors at our house, but if he saw my brothers on the lawn he would dash off like an arrow from a bow on a spirited chase after them round the garden. While walking on Twickenham Common hand in hand with my father we met Garrick on his pretty pony. Hailing my father he moved me to compassion by lamenting the hardship of being summoned in hot weather to town, in order to play before the King of Denmark, who was then a visitor to London. I thought his complaints sincere until my father assured me that Garrick was really well pleased, and that the labour which he deplored was a tribute paid to his talents. No one in the theatrical profession ever commanded greater respect than the Garricks. At Hampton and in the neighbourhood they ranked with the *noblesse*, his highly finished manners and his wife's exquisite taste making their house very attractive. Yet they were quite free from the ostentation which

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is much too common nowadays : I never heard them mention the names of noble visitors, or boast of their intimacy with great people. Garrick's establishment at Hampton was on a sumptuous scale, and he always drove to town in a coach-and-four. I may add that their reiterated praises of two nieces excited girlish jealousy in myself.

Garrick's features were far from showing the placidity suggested by some of his portraits. I confess that I was rather afraid of him, more so than of Dr. Johnson whom I knew to be an extraordinary man. Garrick's countenance often wore a frown, and he spoke with impetuosity, whereas Johnson's diction was slow, and he was kind in his way to children. He used to keep me standing first on one foot and then on another, making my father quote the fable of a lion dandling a kid. One heard a good deal of Garrick's vanity while travelling on the Continent, particularly at Rome where, on his inquiring what people said of him, he received the answer, " Only that Garrick and his wife

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are come." This would mean a good deal in Paris, where his acting was greatly appreciated, but I question whether a sensation would be caused at Rome by any arrival, unless the new-comer were a famous singer.

No married couple could live on better terms than Mr. and Mrs. Garrick. Their manner towards each other was uniformly affectionate, and nothing said by one of them could have given offence to the other. I well remember the agitation in which Garrick was plunged by a wicked report that he and Mrs. Garrick were about to separate on account of his unfaithfulness. He came to my father in terrible dejection ; never was his acting so expressive of his real feelings. He complained of the injustice done him, and the danger of an utterly false report causing uneasiness to his wife. He confessed with contrition that he was not free from reproach during the early years of his manhood, but declared that his affections had never swerved for a moment from Mrs. Garrick, to whose

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charming nature he paid a handsome tribute. Having thus worked off his emotions, he began imagining the stories which would be current against him in Twickenham, and portrayed with consummate art the jubilation of a notorious scandalmonger on starting on a round of gossip visits.

Of Mrs. Garrick, who still lives, an object of veneration, it is almost presumptuous to speak ; but what I am about to write can offend no one, so I will introduce some anecdotes which may be vouched for as true. Mr. Garrick quitted his wife in her box at Drury Lane one evening, saying, as he often did, "I shall be back in a few minutes." He then appeared on the stage to render a prologue or epilogue, I forget which. Mrs. Garrick was in full view of the reciter, but did not recognise him in stage costume until her little lap-dog did so by showing every sign of joy that a dog is capable of. She was arranging to replace an old worn-out carriage of hers when she heard from some Austrian relatives that a young lady of her

family was betrothed to an officer who could not raise the fairly considerable amount of money which the Government demands as a condition to its consent to marriages in the Army, and which is refunded to the wife on widowhood. Mrs. Garrick at once countermanded the carriage, saying in her pretty broken English, " De old one will do for me ; I will haf de young people made happy." When Drury Lane theatre was reopened in 1812 after the fire, Mrs. Garrick spoke to me with gratitude of the proprietors' liberality in allotting a box to her with a retiring-room for receiving her friends. She assured me that they were not legally obliged to admit her into the theatre without payment.

Dr. Johnson's question, " What feelings has Punch ? " was, as every one knows, a reply to Garrick's request not to disturb his feelings when he was about to appear on the stage. He despised Garrick's profession, but envied his success therein ; we may, therefore, smile at the query while we sympathise with Garrick.

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But it is a fact that he was not easily stirred to genuine emotion. I have heard on good authority that, while Garrick and King * were engaged on one of the most impressive scenes in *King Lear*, the former whispered to his colleague, "Tom, it will do ; I see it in their eyes !"

I must now advert to Garrick's infatuation in the matter of his Shakespeare Jubilee.† At our house and in many others this festival afforded immense diversion both in itself and in the extreme ardour of the projector. Foote ‡ went to Stratford-on-Avon in view of caricaturing it. There early one morning he met an Essex squire dressed in blue and silver, whose stolid face showed a kind of bewilderment. He asked Foote what all these preparations meant, and lamented that he had been "brought out of Essex by reports of the Jubilee." Foote rejoined with a stare that can

* Thomas King (1730-1805), actor and dramatist.

† A Jubilee projected by Garrick took place at Stratford-on-Avon, September 6-8, 1769.

‡ Samuel Foote (1720-77), dramatist, actor and mimic.

be imagined, " Out of Essex ; pray, sir, who drove you here ? " My father's only concern in that mummary, as he called it, arose from Garrick's request that he would turn over Shakespeare in search of an apposite quotation for the pedestal of the statue which was to grace the high festival. I can see my father now busy with the first volume of the Plays, and stopping at *Midsummer Night's Dream*, with the exclamation, " I have it, that will do ; I'll look no further ! " Garrick, ardent in everything and especially in all that related to his darling project, came next day to learn my father's choice. What was the latter's surprise to find his visitor disappointed because, forsooth, Beauclerk and Bennet Langton had already hit on that very passage ! Garrick complained he had " hoped for something different from what had been thought of already." The Jubilee failed to produce the effect so eagerly expected ; and those who stood by to exult over its failure had every reason to be gratified. My brother Henry, however,

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thinks that, although it did not succeed as a public amusement, Garrick merited praise for the philosophy with which he bore the wreckage of his hopes. He never complained of the public's injustice or want of taste, but joined in the general laugh against himself and, determined to make something at Drury Lane out of that which had been nothing at Stratford, he turned the Jubilee into a farce which ran for many nights with great success.

Mr. Bennet Langton * once made a dinner party wait for an unconscionable time and Garrick, who was one of the guests, bore the delay with fretful impatience. When at last the latecomer arrived, Garrick suffered his peevishness to get the better of him. On Mr. Langton's approaching as if to address him, he called attention to the former's uncommon height by jumping on a chair to listen. Mr. Langton took the joke calmly, and returned it when Garrick descended by kneeling in order to shake hands with him. It must not

* See Chapter VII.

be inferred that Garrick was unaware of a physical defect which his genius overcame on the stage ; the converse is proved by a story he once told my father. While Aaron Hill * was hiding from his creditors at Plaistow, Mr. Draper the bookseller introduced him to Garrick. Hill treated the British Roscius with his wonted excess of civility and after addressing him said, turning to Draper, " How could you tell me that Mr. Garrick was undersized ? I was really deceived by your misrepresentation ! " Garrick could not swallow such gross flattery, he said, " Mr. Hill, I am too conscious of my defect to need being reminded of it."

* Aaron Hill, dramatist (1685-1750).

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON



National Portrait Gallery.

Reynolds.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

CHAPTER IV

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

Johnson's gait and dress ; testimony of a tailor.—Sir J. Hawkins on the *Idler*, *Scottish Tour* and political pamphlets.—Johnson's pension ; his conversation ; influence of Boswell, and of long residence at Streatham.—Rupture with Mrs. Thrale.—Sir J. Hawkins's secession from the Turk's Head Club ; "The Burkes" ; the Essex Head Club.—Despite inborn infirmities and constitutional melancholy Johnson was less irritable than other authors and quite free from jealousy ; his inherited disease should excuse shortcomings.—A visit to Bolt Court ; Johnson's attempts at politeness ; he was stimulated by conversing with distinguished men ; his superstitious scruples ; his wife and household ; his complimenting too studied ; a very quick reader.

MY earliest recollection of Dr. Johnson is that of watching him approach our house to pay one of his customary visits. He walked heavily but at a great rate, with his left arm always stretched across his chest, bringing the hand under his

chin. My brother Henry saw him get out of a hackney coach in Fleet Street and make his way up the entrance to Bolt Court in zigzag fashion, almost brushing against the wall on either side. His clothes hung loosely, and the right-hand pocket swung violently, the lining of the coat on that side being always visible. I remember a tailor bringing his pattern-book to show my brothers, and pointing out a purple cloth, such as no one else wore, as the Doctor's usual choice. We all shouted with amazement on learning that "Polypheme"—as I am ashamed to say we nicknamed him—ever had a new coat, but the tailor assured us that he was a good customer. Even now I can call up his brown hands, metal sleeve-buttons and plain wrist-bands at a time when all gentlemen wore lace ruffles. His coat-sleeves were cut very wide, showing his linen up to the elbow. He generally wore a cut and bushy wig, but it was sometimes dressed in curls, giving him a disagreeable appearance, unsuited to his age and character.

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I certainly had no idea that this same Dr. Johnson, who was never mentioned by ladies without a smile, would one day reflect honour on his country and ourselves ; nor did I see in my father any trace of the spirit of adulation which was afterwards aroused in the breasts of people who discovered that it was creditable to have been honoured by Johnson's acquaintance. My father appreciated him highly, but treated him as he did other valued friends. I remember his reading the *Idler* and the *Scotch Tour* ; he was disappointed with the first, but in the *Tour* he recognised the comprehensiveness of the author's mind, and the compressed turgidity of his style. My father admired the political pamphlets, but admitted to us children his regret that Johnson should have written up principles the very reverse of those which he had adopted in early life. It was something of a virtue to have been, like Johnson, a professed Jacobite, but some sophistry is needed to account for his tergiversation. Perhaps the best explanation is given by the reply made

by a sensible woman of rank to reproaches for having married beneath her. "My dear," she said, "one would do a good deal to secure a good home." Johnson made excellent use of the comforts provided by his pension.*

The conversation I heard during his visits to us had small interest for myself. I knew that whatever was brought forward as a settled opinion by any one present would be met with "Why, sir, I see no reason——" or, "Sir, if you mean to say——" implying dissent, but becoming downright contradiction and finally exploding in one of those concentrated outbursts which were the forte of his powerful mind. It was remarked of Johnson that persons rather than things formed the staple of his conversation; his early life, pitiable as it had been, could have afforded few subjects worthy of being remembered. In addressing his friends he often displayed a puerile attempt at playfulness which did not sit well on an aged philosopher; it was "Bozzy,"

* In 1762 Johnson accepted a Government pension of £300.

“ Goldy,” “ Langty ” and “ Hawky ” for intimates.

The influence which Boswell acquired over Johnson came upon us as the revelation of a mistress's power would have done, and none of his friends—except the circle at Streatham—approved of his engrossing engagements there.* “ We can never see him when we call ” and “ He is never at leisure when we invite him,” were remarks which I constantly overheard. He spoke of the luxuries of Streatham as the indulgences vouchsafed to an invalid ; and after losing them he condescended to accept invitations from people whose society in no way did him credit. In answer to my father's gentle reproaches he said, “ I go anywhere to be at ease ; and they let me do anything I like.” These new acquaintances had not the claims of his friend Strahan † nor could they

* Johnson paid his first visit to Thrale's mansion at Streatham in 1762, and treated it as his country house until the estrangement caused by Mrs. Thrale's remarriage in 1784.

† William Strahan (1715-85), printer and publisher. Printed Johnson's *Dictionary*, and published works by the greatest writers of his time.

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attract the society which gathered round Mr. Thrale's bounteous table. But sick at heart and burdened with disease, he resembled a stricken deer, which seeks any pasture where the sun shines and the herbage is sweet. The effect on Johnson's character of his constant residence at Streatham was often discussed between my father and Mrs. Welch.* No one knew Johnson better than she, and I have heard her lament the friction of mixed company as tending to assimilate him with ordinary people, and so to lessen the originality of his mind. Most of his friends expected him to marry Mr. Thrale's widow, or at least to reside permanently at Streatham after its owner was no more. We guessed the course which he intended to adopt from a remark which fell from him at our house. On his taking leave, after telling us that he was leaving London, my mother said, "I suppose you are going to Bath." "Why should you suppose so, Madam?" "Why, because Mrs. Thrale is

* See p. 116.

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there.” “ I know nothing of Mrs. Thrale,” he roared ; “ good evening to you ! ”

The Club which met at the Turk’s Head Tavern was, in my earliest recollection, a source of great pleasure to my father, and he regarded his secession from it as a painful necessity. This has been the subject of invidious comment, and I must admit that the reasons he gave for resigning membership were not very convincing. I suspect that he was disgusted with Mr. Burke’s overbearing manners, and the monopoly of conversation which he assumed, reducing the other members—Johnson excepted—to silence. My father used to quote Herbert’s lines :

A civil guest

Will no more talk all than eat all the feast.

Johnson himself was not an impatient listener ; he made it a rule, and one which he expected others to observe, that a speaker should not be interrupted without good reason. I often heard Mr. Bennet Langton complain that Burke was not so forbearing. But it

should be remembered that "the Burkes," as they were called,* were then considered as Irish adventurers who had come to London without good auguries or settled principles. They had to talk their way into the world which was to furnish them with a livelihood, and could not be expected to lay down their tools in order to listen to other people who had less stimulating motives. That Johnson was aware of the Burkes' obtrusiveness was shown by the language he used regarding them in conversation with my father; and he complained to Mrs. Williams of the younger Burke's discourtesy, which he contrasted unfavourably with my brother's behaviour.

I always thought that Johnson's respect for my father was evinced by the secrecy with which he established the Essex Street Club just a year before his death. It was never once mentioned in the course of solemn conversations on the necessity of withdrawing from the

* Edmund Burke, statesman (1729-97), and his kinsman, William, a supposed author of the *Letters of Junius*; d. 1798.

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world. I must admit that Boswell was justified in criticising Sir John Hawkins's published reference to that symposium as being "a six-penny Club meeting in an alehouse." In what respect was it inferior to the Club which Johnson had founded in 1749 at a beefsteak house in Ivy Lane? The rate of subscription was of no consequence in a society to which neither birth nor wealth alone could gain admittance and, whatever the "Essex Head" might be as a rendezvous, it was absolved of indignity by Johnson's presence, and its proximity to Bolt Court gave him a better opportunity of meeting his friends. I am sorry that my father should have written pettishly on the subject; he probably did not like being passed over, and I am sure that he did not construe Johnson's silence as I have done.

There was one feature in Johnson's character that has not received the commendation which it deserves. Despite his infirmities, bodily and mental, he belonged to the *genus irritabile*

in a far less degree than most of his fellow-authors. Had he really been the snarler of his time, pity would have saved him from censure had the causes of his discontent been widely known. He felt the serious obstacle of inborn infirmity, and the dreadful disorder that threatened to paralyse his powers at the moment when he became conscious of possessing them had a disastrous effect on his spirits. It must be remembered, too, that his depression was increased by the necessity of performing literary work which required ease of body and freedom of mind. Under such circumstances every exertion was doubly meritorious, and every failure entitled him to a double measure of compassion. It is still more to his honour that jealousy was not excited in Dr. Johnson by the ordinary cause of mortification. He saw Dr. Taylor, the companion of his studies and witness of his early poverty, raised to bloated affluence, and that with qualifications far inferior to his own ; yet I do not remember any reflection falling from his lips on the

disparity of their fortunes. He certainly envied Garrick, while loving and admiring him ; but it was because he saw histrionic excellence reaping a richer reward than it deserved.

On one of those days when I was out of favour at home my father said, " Miss "—my designation in disgrace—" I intend taking you to Dr. Johnson's." The decree came like a thunderbolt, but I was obliged to accompany him to Bolt Court, where I soothed my ruffled spirits by talking exclusively to Mrs. Desmoulins * during the visit. I am convinced that Johnson neither saw nor heard me and, as there was nothing in the bond about being civil to him, my father had nothing to say.

We have Johnson's own testimony to the fact that he considered himself a well-bred man, and this visit gave me an opportunity of observing his attempts at polite behaviour. He was then declining fast, and Sir Joshua's

* A penniless widow, daughter of Dr. Swinfen of Lichfield, " for many years humanely supported in Dr. Johnson's house " (Boswell).

unmarried sister sent a servant to ask after his health. "Tell Miss Reynolds," he said, "that I can *not* be well because she does *not* come to see me." And he looked round the room as though he expected applause for a hyperbolical compliment rendered to a person who had not one characteristic deserving it. But perhaps he was only paying her back in her own coin ; for every one knew that Miss Reynolds was in the habit of smothering him with adulation.

Johnson had peculiar feelings as regards each of his friends, and was stimulated in different degrees by their conversation. My brother Henry says that a faithful record of his intercourse with Lord Thurlow* or Edmund Burke would be quite invaluable ; to the first he always "talked his best" ; and the second always taxed his intellectual powers to the utmost. But the inquisitive world would not have been satisfied without Boswell's trivialities, although he sometimes punctured our friend sorely in order to extract what he wanted.

* Lord Thurlow (1731-1806) ; Lord Chancellor, 1778.

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Much has been written regarding Johnson's excessive, nay, superstitious scrupulousness, but in my opinion without considering his infirmities. Had he realised that the service required by the Gospel is perfect freedom, he would have abandoned efforts at self-perfection and lived at ease. Such was not to be, and his persistence is the more laudable because it was not stimulated by the use of wine or drugs. In selecting passages from his little books recording self-examination, I found that he considered boundless charity as an atonement for imaginary sins. What grounds could he have had for reiterated expressions of remorse? None can be discovered in his writings; nor yet in any record of his married life. His fulsome fondness towards Mrs. Johnson and his excessive grief at her death perplexed my father, who always thought the Johnson *ménage* a most incongruous union. The unhappy man probably blamed himself for the small regard he had shown for his wife's comfort, and felt his constitutional melancholy aggravated by

the loss of one who must often have tried him sorely. I know nothing of his domestic economy in her lifetime ; but it exceeded my expectations under Mrs. Williams's management, and indeed afterwards, when he was more at the mercy of dependants. I never penetrated his sanctum, and never saw him except in a decent parlour with stout, old-fashioned furniture.

Johnson was prone to pay neat compliments, indicating a mind free from jealousy or self-importance, and ready to bring out good points in other people. The *Scotch Tour* abounds in such gems of equity, and the best specimen occurs in the preface to his *Life of Young*.* In colloquial intercourse, however, his attempts at complimenting lost their effect because they were evidently studied. We all knew what was coming. His head dipped lower, the semicircle in which it revolved

* *The Life of Young*, who wrote "Night Thoughts," in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, was written by Herbert Croft (Boswell).

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increased, and the tone of his voice deepened in proportion to his wish to appear civil. A lady who knew him well described his movements in reading—which he did with great rapidity—by remarking, “Dr. Johnson’s head swung seconds.”

THE JOHNSON CIRCLE—SIR
JOSHUA REYNOLDS

CHAPTER V

THE JOHNSON CIRCLE—SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

Sir J. Hawkins's long acquaintance with Sir Joshua Reynolds ; a visit in childhood to Leicester Fields ; the all-accomplished Miss Cornelia Knight ; criterion of a Vandyke portrait.—The "Discourses at the Royal Academy" were Sir Joshua's work unaided. The evanescence of his portraits attributed by him to an excessive use of carmine ; the revenge of a disgruntled employer.—Sir Joshua's happiness in his art ; his studio did not reek of oil and turpentine.—A commission from Catherine Empress of Russia.—Sir Joshua's remark on the invitation cards for Johnson's funeral.—He always painted standing.

I CANNOT recollect the commencement of my father's acquaintance with Sir Joshua Reynolds,* but I do remember that he came with his sister to visit us at Twickenham before he was knighted and took

* Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), the greatest British portrait painter ; P.R.A.

a house in Leicester Fields. My father lived in intimacy with many artists and was fond of looking on while they worked ; but Sir Joshua had qualities so alluring that it would have been desirable to make his acquaintance, whatever profession he might have adopted. I cannot imagine what arguments were used by his sister, Miss Reynolds, to induce my mother to take me with her on a visit to Leicester Fields, but I certainly went there, for I remember being dressed in pink satin and muslin for the purpose. Such an honour was, however, ill bestowed on a child of eleven who could do nothing but stare and listen. The party at Sir Joshua's consisted of Mrs. Knight, her step-daughter, the all-accomplished Miss Cornelia Knight,* Miss Reynolds, her niece Miss Palmer, Mr. Edmund Burke, Mr. Dyer and two or three other gentlemen. I recollect Sir Joshua's exhibiting a beautiful sketch he had made for his visiting-card, and I have a

* Miss Cornelia Knight (1757-1837), companion to Queen and Princess Charlotte. Her autobiography, published 1861, is a valuable record of Court life.

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faint remembrance of a conversation regarding the origin of a very dark portrait which hung over the drawing-room chimney-piece. Sir Joshua said that if, as he believed, it was a Vandyke, that master had not painted the hands. From that moment I became curious about painting, and never saw a Vandyke portrait without examining the hands in accordance with Sir Joshua's criterion. Miss Cornelia Knight was then extraordinarily tall for a girl of fourteen. She was dressed in a very rich satin gown which would seem modern even now, and had beautiful embroidery, the work of her own hands. This received due admiration, and Miss Reynolds, just fresh from Paris, told us that the young lady had translated two of Sir Joshua's "Discourses at the Academy" into excellent French. After tea we juniors accompanied Miss Palmer, the younger of Sir Joshua's nieces, into his painting-room, where for the benefit of her aunt she stole all the colours she could scrape from his easel.

When Dr. Johnson died I heard Mr. Bennet Langton say to my father, " We shall now know whether he has or has not assisted Sir Joshua in his ' Discourses.' " The progressive improvement in subsequent lectures has settled the fact of authorship ; moreover, my brother Henry remembers Dr. Johnson saying, when Sir John Hawkins alluded to the general opinion that he had helped Sir Joshua in writing the " Discourses," that his assistance had never exceeded the substitution of a word or two for what he (Sir Joshua) had written.

Public opinion has long since decided in favour of Sir Joshua's pre-eminence as a painter ; but there is some room for adverse remark. To him attaches the censure which is due to any one who, being paid enormous prices for his work, executes it in perishable materials. If it were true, as has been asserted, that he took care to paint his own portrait for the Florentine Gallery in durable colours, no terms of reprobation would be strong enough ; but I am assured that the facts were otherwise. Sir Joshua must

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have been sensible of his error, for he told my father that he had discovered its source which, he said, consisted in the excessive employment of carmine—a colour which he wrongly believed he could “shut in with varnish.” He had hastily concluded that painters in general were too sparing in the use of carmine on account of its cost and, considering the high prices he received for his portraits, he thought it would be unhandsome to grudge that colour. He was, however, convinced that nothing would make it lasting; and future portraits would prove that he had eschewed carmine. Unfortunately his later portraits were not more durable. His flesh tints resemble those of Rubens whom he always admired; now Rubens revels in carmine and yet his colours never fly.*

There is a well-known story of a man of

* A contemporary epigram on Sir Joshua ran as follows :

“The art of painting was at first designed
To bring the dead, our ancestors, to mind.
But this same painter has reversed the plan
And made the portrait die before the man.”

fashion inviting Sir Joshua to examine some pictures in his possession ; and ordering a servant after dinner to bring a large roll of canvas which, on being opened out, proved to consist of faded family portraits painted by his guest. This narrative reflects small honour on the temper which could indulge a spirit of revenge at the expense of so great a man, but I must confess that the finest outlines thrown on canvas by Sir Joshua's graceful hand cannot atone for this cardinal defect.

No one could justly accuse him of that common fault of eminent men—a disposition to think that his talents were underrated by the public. In order to lessen the labour of portrait-painting he doubled his prices to sitters, but found that by doing so he merely increased their number. He was not inclined to complain of confinement indoors, and his manner of walking showed want of practice. Nor was he in any way insensible of the many causes he had for thankfulness. During a summer stroll with my father in St. James's

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Park he spoke feelingly of his happiness in being obliged to "get his bread" by doing that which of all things he loved best to do. His painting-room was spacious and had none of the smell of oil and turpentine which occurs where colours are prepared in the usual way, and which regales the olfactory nerves of lovers of the art.

His modest acknowledgment in the "Discourses" of a want of facility in drawing academy figures, and his judicious wish that every child might be taught drawing until the human figure was as familiar as the letter A, do Sir Joshua infinite credit. No artist, indeed, can feel at ease in painting anything beyond a dressed portrait, without some knowledge of the grammar of his art. He was highly pleased at being employed by the Empress Catherine of Russia to paint a picture on any subject he liked; and his range of ideas in selecting one showed no lack of self-confidence on his part. After discussing this question with my father, he fixed on "Hercules,"

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“ because,” he said, “ we painters love to people the sky.”

I will conclude with a circumstance which I would rather not mention, but one must be honest in order to be credited. On Dr. Johnson's death a meeting took place at our house to make arrangements for his funeral. Sir Joshua's deafness made the conversation that ensued audible in an adjoining room, and I overheard him say, “ I suppose we must have the death's head and marrowbones ? ” meaning the decorations which usually appear on a card of invitation to a funeral. This, however, was an isolated departure from good taste. When a monument to Johnson was discussed, Sir Joshua said that he would have an enamelled portrait ready and a furnace built for firing it. It was his prayer that the last word he would utter in the Royal Academy might be the name of his adored Michael Angelo. Sir Joshua Reynolds lived to a good old age ; let it be remembered that he always painted standing.

JOHNSON ON GARRICK

CHAPTER VI

JOHNSON ON GARRICK

A skit by Sir Joshua Reynolds describing Johnson's manner in controversy.

ALADY whose uncle was one of Johnson's friends, and who lived in great intimacy with Sir Joshua Reynolds's family, has allowed me to print the following *jeu d'esprit* which in my humble judgment is a very vivid imitation of Johnson's language and manner. It was thrown off by Sir Joshua without any idea of publication, to illustrate a remark which he had made that "Johnson considered Garrick as his own property, and would not suffer any one to praise or blame him but himself." It consists of two imaginary dialogues ; in the first Sir Joshua himself is

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represented as incurring censure from Johnson
by singing Garrick's praises ; in the second
Mr. Gibbon evokes excessive laudation of
Garrick by depreciating him.

JOHNSON AGAINST GARRICK

Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds

REYNOLDS (*aside*) : Let me alone, I'll bring
him out. I have been thinking, Dr. Johnson,
this morning on a matter that has puzzled me
very much ; it is a subject that I dare say has
often passed in your thoughts ; and though *I*
cannot, I dare say *you* have made up your mind
on it.

JOHNSON : Folly, folly ! What is all this
preparation ? What is all this mighty matter ?

REYNOLDS : Why, it is a very weighty
matter. The subject I have been thinking on
is this, Predestination and Free-will ; two
things I cannot reconcile together for the life
of me. In my opinion, Dr. Johnson, Free-will
and Foreknowledge cannot be reconciled.

JOHNSON : Sir, it is not of very great

importance what *your* opinion is upon such a question.

REYNOLDS : But I meant only, Dr. Johnson, to know *your* opinion.

JOHNSON : No, Sir, you meant no such thing : you meant only to show these gentlemen that you are not the man they took you to be, but that you think of high matters sometimes ; and that you may have the credit of having it said that you held an argument with Sam. Johnson on Predestination and Free-will ; a subject of such magnitude as to have engaged the attention of the world and to have perplexed the wisdom of man for these two thousand years ; a subject on which the fallen angels who had not yet lost all their original brightness found themselves in wandering mazes lost. That such a subject could be discussed in the levity of convivial conversation is a degree of absurdity beyond what is easily conceivable.

REYNOLDS : It is so, as you say, to be sure ; I talked once to our friend Garrick upon this

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subject ; but I remember we could make
nothing of it.

JOHNSON : Oh, noble pair !

REYNOLDS : Garrick was a clever fellow,
Dr. Johnson. Garrick, take him altogether,
was certainly a very great man.

JOHNSON : Garrick, Sir, may be a great
man in *your* opinion, as far as I know, but he
was not so in *mine* : little things are great to
little men.

REYNOLDS : I have heard you say, Dr.
Johnson——

JOHNSON : Sir, you never heard me say that
David Garrick was a great man ; you may
have heard me say that Garrick was a good
repeater of other men's words—words put into
his mouth by other men ; this makes but a
faint approach towards being a great man.

REYNOLDS : But take Garrick upon the
whole, now, in regard to conversation.

JOHNSON : Well, Sir, in regard to conversa-
tion ; I never discovered in the conversation
of David Garrick any intellectual energy, any

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wide grasp of thought, any extensive comprehension of mind, or that he possessed any of those powers to which *great* could with any degree of propriety be applied.

REYNOLDS : But still——

JOHNSON : Hold, Sir ; I have not done. There are, to be sure, in the laxity of colloquial speech various kinds of greatness ; a man may be a great tobacconist ; a man may be a great painter ; he may be likewise a great mimic ; now you may be the one and Garrick the other, and yet neither of you be a great man.

REYNOLDS : But, Dr. Johnson——

JOHNSON : Hold, Sir ; I have often lamented how dangerous it is to investigate and to discriminate characters to men who have no discriminative powers.

REYNOLDS : But Garrick, as a companion, I heard you say no longer ago than last Wednesday at Mr. Thrale's table——

JOHNSON : You tease me, Sir ! Whatever you may have heard me say no longer ago than last Wednesday at Mr. Thrale's table, I

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tell you I do not say so now ; besides, as I said
before, you may not have understood me, you
misapprehended me, you may not have
heard me.

REYNOLDS : I am sure I heard you.

JOHNSON : Besides, besides, Sir, besides, do
you not know, are you so ignorant as not to
know, that it is the highest degree of rudeness
to quote a man against himself ?

REYNOLDS : But if you differ from yourself,
and give one opinion to-day——

JOHNSON : Have done, Sir. The company,
you see, are tired as well as myself.

T'OTHER SIDE

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Gibbon

JOHNSON : No, Sir ; Garrick's fame was
prodigious, not only in England but over all
Europe : even in Russia, I have been told,
he was a proverb ; when any one had repeated
well he was called a second Garrick.

GIBBON : I think he had full as much
reputation as he deserved.

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JOHNSON : I do not pretend to know, Sir, what your meaning may be by saying he had as much reputation as he deserved ; he deserved much and he had much.

GIBBON : Why surely, Dr. Johnson, his merit was in small things only ; he had none of those qualities that make a really great man.

JOHNSON : Sir, I as little understand what your meaning may be when you speak of the qualities that make a great man ; it is a vague term. Garrick was no common man ; a man above the common size of man may surely, without any great impropriety, be called a great man. In my opinion, he has very reasonably fulfilled the prophecy which he once reminded me of my having made to his mother, when she asked me how little David went on at school—that he would come to be hanged, or come to be a great man. No, Sir ; it is undoubtedly true that the same qualities united with virtue or vice make a hero or a rogue, a great general or a highwayman. Now Garrick, we are sure, was never hanged, and in

regard to his being a great man, you must take the whole man together. It must be considered in how many things Garrick excelled, in which every man desires to excel ; setting aside his excellence as an actor, in which he is acknowledged to be unrivalled ; as a man, as a poet, as a convivial companion, you will find few his equals and none his superior. As a man, he was kind, friendly, benevolent, and generous.

GIBBON : Of Garrick's generosity I never heard ; I understood his character to be totally the reverse, and that he was reckoned to love money.

JOHNSON : That he loved money, nobody will dispute ; who does not ? But if you mean by loving money that he was parsimonious to a fault, Sir, you have been misinformed. To Foote, and such scoundrels who circulated those reports ; to such profligate spendthrifts, prudence is meanness and economy avarice. That Garrick in early youth was brought up in strict habits of economy, I believe ; and that

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they were necessary I have heard from himself ; to suppose that Garrick might inadvertently act from this habit, and be saving in small things, can be no wonder. But let it be remembered at the same time that if he was frugal by habit he was liberal from principle ; that when he acted from reflection, he did what his fortune enabled him to do, and what was expected from such a fortune. I remember no instance of David's parsimony but once, when he stopt Mrs. Woffington from replenishing the tea-pot ; it was already, he said, as red as blood ; and this instance is doubtful and happened many years ago. In the latter part of his life I observed no blameable parsimony in David ; his table was elegant and even splendid ; his houses both in town and country, his equipage, and I think all his habits of life, were such as might be expected from a man who had acquired great riches. In regard to his generosity which you seem to question, I shall only say, there is no man to whom I would apply with more

confidence of success for the loan of £200 to assist a common friend, than to David ; and this too with very little, if any, probability of its being repaid.

GIBBON : You were going to say something of him as a writer, you don't rate him very high as a poet.

JOHNSON : Sir, a man may be a respectable poet without being a Homer, as a man may be a good player without being a Garrick. In the lighter kinds of poetry, in the appendages of the drama, he was, if not the first, in the very first class. He had a readiness and facility, a dexterity of mind that appeared extraordinary even to men of experience, who are not apt to wonder from ignorance. Writing prologues, epilogues, epigrams he said he considered as his trade ; and he was what a man should be, always and at all times ready at his trade. He required two hours for a prologue or epilogue, and five minutes for an epigram. Once, at Burke's table, the company proposed a subject, and Garrick furnished his epigram within the

time ; the same experiment was repeated in the garden, and with the same success.

GIBBON : Garrick had some flippancy of parts, to be sure, and was brisk and lively in company, and by the help of mimicry and story-telling made himself a pleasant companion ; but here the whole world gave the superiority to Foote, and Garrick himself appears to have felt as if his genius was rebuked by the superior powers of Foote. It has been often observed that Garrick never dared to enter into competition with him, but was content to act an under part to bring Foote out.

JOHNSON : That this conduct of Garrick's might be interpreted by the gross minds of Foote and his friends as if he was afraid to encounter him, I can easily imagine. Of the natural superiority of Garrick over Foote this conduct is an instance ; he disdained entering into competition with such a fellow, and made him the buffoon of the company, or as you may say, brought him out. And what was at last brought out, but coarse jests and vulgar

merriment, indecency, and impiety, a relation of events which, upon the face of them, could never have happened, characters grossly conceived and as coarsely represented? Foote was even no mimic, he went out of himself it is true, but without going into another man; he was excelled by Garrick even in this, which is considered as Foote's greatest excellence. Garrick, besides his exact imitation of the voice and gesture of his original to a degree of refinement of which Foote had no conception, exhibited the mind and mode of thinking of the person imitated. Besides, Garrick confined his powers within the limits of decency; he had a character to preserve, Foote had none. By Foote's buffoonery and broad-faced merriment, private friendship, public decency, and everything estimable amongst men, were trod under foot. We all know the difference of their reception in the world. No man, however high in rank or literature, but was proud to know Garrick and was glad to have him at his table; no man ever considered

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or treated Garrick as a player ; he may be said to have stepped out of his own rank into a higher, and by raising himself he raised the rank of his profession. At a convivial table, his exhilarating powers were unrivalled, he was lively, entertaining, quick in discerning the ridicule of life and as ready in representing it ; and on graver subjects there were few topics in which he could not bear a part. It is injurious to the character of Garrick to be named in the same breath with Foote. That Foote was admitted sometimes into good company (to do the man what credit I can) I will allow, but then it was merely to play tricks. Foote's merriment was that of a buffoon and Garrick's that of a gentleman.

GIBBON : I have been told, on the contrary, that Garrick, in company, had not the easy manner of a gentleman.

JOHNSON : Sir, I don't know what you have been told or what your ideas may be of the manners of a gentleman. Garrick had no vulgarity in his manners ; it is true Garrick

had not the airiness of a fop, nor did he assume an affected indifference to what was passing : he did not lounge from the table to the window and from thence to the fire ; or whilst you were addressing your discourse to him, turn from you and talk to his next neighbour, or give any indication that he was tired of his company ; if such manners form your ideas of a fine gentleman, Garrick certainly had them not.

GIBBON : I mean that Garrick was more over-awed by the presence of the great, and more obsequious to rank than Foote, who considered himself as their equal and treated them with the same familiarity as they treated each other.

JOHNSON : He did so, and what did the fellow get by it ? The grossness of his mind prevented him from seeing that this familiarity was merely suffered as they would play with a dog ; he got no ground by affecting to call peers by their surnames ; the foolish fellow fancied that lowering *them* was raising himself to their level. This affectation of familiarity

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with the great, this childish ambition of momentary exaltation obtained by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the barriers between one order of society and another, only showed his folly and meanness ; he did not see that by encroaching on others' dignity, he put himself in their power, either to be repelled with helpless indignity or endured by clemency and condescension. Garrick by paying due respect to rank respected himself. What he gave was returned, and what was returned he kept for ever ; his advancement was on firm ground ; he was recognised in public as well as respected in private ; and as no man was ever more courted and better received by the public so no man was ever less spoiled by its flattery. Garrick continued advancing to the last, till he had acquired every advantage that high birth or title could bestow except the precedence of going into a room ; but when he was there he was treated with as much attention as the first man at the table. It is to the credit

of Garrick that he never laid any claim to this distinction ; it was as voluntarily allowed as if it had been his birth-right. In this, I confess, I looked on David with some degree of envy, not so much for the respect he received, as for the manner of its being acquired. What fell into his lap unsought I have been forced to claim. I began the world by fighting my way ; there was something about me that invited insult or at least a disposition to neglect, and I was equally disposed to repel insult and to claim attention ; and I fear I continue too much in this disposition now it is no longer necessary. I receive at present as much favour as I have a right to expect ; I am not one of the complainers of the neglect of merit.

GIBBON : Your pretensions, Dr. Johnson, nobody will dispute ; I cannot place Garrick on the same footing ; your reputation will continue increasing after your death ; when Garrick will be totally forgot, you will be for ever considered as a classic.

JOHNSON : Enough, Sir, enough ; the

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company would be better pleased to see us quarrel than bandying compliments.

GIBBON : But you must allow, Dr. Johnson, that Garrick was too much a slave to fame, or rather to the mean ambition of living with the great, and terribly afraid of making himself cheap even with *them*, by which he debarred himself of much pleasant society. Employing so much attention and so much management upon such little things implies, I think, a little mind. It was observed by his friend Colman, that he never went into company but with a plot how to get out of it ; he was every minute called out, and went off or returned as there was or was not a probability of his shining.

JOHNSON : In regard to his mean ambition, as you call it, of living with the great, what was the boast of Pope and is every man's wish can be no reproach to Garrick ; he who says he despises it knows he lies. That Garrick husbanded his fame, the fame which he had justly acquired both at the theatre and at the

table, is not denied ; but where is the blame, either in the one or the other, of leaving as little as he could to chance? Besides, Sir, consider what you have said ; you first deny Garrick's pretensions to fame, and then accuse him of too great attention to preserve what he never possessed.

GIBBON : I don't understand——

JOHNSON : Sir, I can't help that.

GIBBON : Well but, Dr. Johnson, you will not vindicate him in his over and above attention to his fame, his inordinate desire to exhibit himself to new men like a coquette ever seeking after new conquests, to the total neglect of old friends and admirers. “He threw off his friends like a huntsman his pack,” always looking out for new game.

JOHNSON : When you quoted the line from Goldsmith, you ought in fairness to have given what followed—“He knew when he pleased he could whistle them back” ; which implies at least that he possessed a power over other men's minds approaching to fascination. But

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consider, Sir, what is to be done ; here is a man whom every other man desired to know ; Garrick could not receive and cultivate all according to each man's conception of his own value ; we are all apt enough to consider ourselves as possessing a right to be excepted from the common crowd. Besides, Sir, I do not see why that should be imputed to him as a crime which we all so irresistibly feel and practise ; we all make a greater exertion in the presence of new men than of old acquaintances. It is undoubtedly true that Garrick divided his attention among so many that but little was left to the share of any individual ; like the extension and dissipation of waters into dew, there was not quantity united sufficiently to quench any man's thirst : but this is the inevitable state of things ; Garrick, no more than another man, could unite what are in their natures incompatible.

GIBBON : But Garrick not only was excluded by this means from real friendship, but

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accused of treating those whom he called friends
with insincerity and double dealing.

JOHNSON : Sir, it is not true : his character
in that respect is misunderstood. Garrick was,
to be sure, very ready in promising, but he
intended at the time to fulfil his promise ; he
intended no deceit ; his politeness or his good
nature—call it which you will—made him
unwilling to deny ; he wanted the courage to
say *no* even to unreasonable demands. This
was the great error of his life ; by raising
expectations which he did not, perhaps could
not, gratify, he made many enemies ; at the
same time, it must be remembered that this
error proceeded from the same cause which
produced many of his virtues. Friendships
from warmth of temper too suddenly taken up
and too violent to continue ended, as they are
like to do, in disappointment ; enmity suc-
ceeded disappointment : his friends became his
enemies ; and those having been fostered in his
bosom well knew his sensibility to reproach ;
they took care that he should be amply supplied

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with such bitter potions as they were capable of administering ; their impotent efforts he ought to have despised, but he felt them nor did he affect insensibility.

GIBBON : And that sensibility probably shortened his life.

JOHNSON : No, Sir, he died of a disorder of which you or any other man may die, without being killed by too much sensibility.

GIBBON : But you will allow, however, that this sensibility, those fine feelings, made him the great actor he was.

JOHNSON : This is all cant, fit only for kitchen-wenches and chambermaids. Garrick's trade was to represent passion, not to feel it. Ask Reynolds whether he felt the distress of Count Hugolino when he drew it.

GIBBON : But surely he feels the passion at the moment he is representing it.

JOHNSON : About as much as Punch feels. That Garrick himself gave in to this foppery of feelings I can easily believe, but he knew at the same time that he lied. He might think

it right, as far as I know, to have what fools imagined he ought to have ; but it is amazing that any one should be so ignorant as to think that an actor will risk his reputation by depending on the feelings that shall be excited in the presence of two hundred people, on the repetition of certain words which he has repeated two hundred times before in what actors call their study. No, Sir, Garrick left nothing to chance ; every gesture, every expression of countenance, and variation of voice was settled in his closet before he set his foot upon the stage.

THE JOHNSON CIRCLE—BENNET
LANGTON AND OTHERS

CHAPTER VII

THE JOHNSON CIRCLE—BENNET LANGTON AND OTHERS

Bennet Langton, a close friend of Johnson's ; his piety, philosophy and inertia ; scene in Bolt Court ; three types of conscience ; Langton's scheme of education ; " chaffed " by George III ; too tall for a ready-made great coat.—Macaronis in the Guards ; Langton as a conversationalist ; his last illness and death.—Saunders Welch, a Police Magistrate, preserves the wall of Bedford House from destruction by a mob ; his death-bed promise.—Anecdotes of Henry Fielding.—Welch's daughters ; the eldest, a beauty, marries Nollekens the sculptor ; his uncouthness and genius ; Mrs. Nollekens' household ; her avarice.—The younger daughter, Ann Welch, was highly accomplished ; a footman admirer ; her Johnsonese ; modesty and timidity in society.—Mrs. Thrale, afterwards Mrs. Piozzi ; her love of French fashions ; her luminous mind ; opinion on the Southwark Electors.—Mr. Thrale was not a gentleman ; what constitutes gentility.

IF I were asked to name the man in whose company Johnson appeared to the greatest advantage I would certainly specify Mr. Bennet Langton.* Not that his

* Bennet Langton, of Langton, Lincolnshire (1737-1801), a profound scholar and a very amiable man.

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mind was a "forcing-pump" for Johnson's, but that he left his friend's mind perfect freedom of action while gently exercising it. Mr. Langton's good breeding, the pleasing tone of his voice and his classical attainments were stimulating in a high degree; and Johnson's thorough respect saved him from the harshness which was often excited by controversy. In his visits to Mr. Langton's family Johnson found scope for the tenderness of his feelings without any counteracting irritation; and his host's position, as owner of a Lincolnshire village which bore his name, was by no means lost on the Doctor. He agreed with our venerable sovereign George III in thinking the status of an English gentleman of long descent, an affluent income and the possibility of rising to any height by exercising his talents in all respect enviable. Mr. Langton's humble Christianity and contemplative turn of mind commended themselves to Johnson and led him to utter the wish, "May my spirit be with Langton!" These qualities were associated

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with a certain inertia, which appeared when Mrs. Langton was not at hand to order things, due to his height of six feet six and to the construction of his mind. He fulfilled Sir Thomas Browne's injunction to "Sit quietly in the soft showers of Providence."

On one occasion, however, I remember Johnson's departing from the gentleness with which he treated his old friend. On a Sunday I accompanied my father to Bolt Court after Church service. We found several visitors there, including Mr. Langton, who stood leaning against a door while he listened to one of Johnson's "objurgations" because he had not started at once for Lincolnshire on hearing of his mother's serious illness. Mr. Langton's affection for her was undoubted, but his natural inertness kept him back, nor were Johnson's arguments of any avail. My father was referred to, and a few whispered words from him led Mr. Langton to take leave. As he was quitting the room, Johnson howled out with the customary semicircular movement of his head,

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“Do, Hawkins, teach Langton a little knowledge of the world !” None of us understood the allusion, nor did I on any other occasion find that Johnson displayed worldly knowledge.

It is interesting to compare the dispositions of three men who lived in an intimacy which, according to the old adage, “ Birds of a feather flock together,” should have implied similarity of character. If, however, we take tenderness of conscience as a test of resemblance we shall see marked differences between the three. Johnson groaned aloud under the prickings of that troublesome visitant ; Langton obeyed her slightest whisper ; Boswell protested, and made vows of amendment which were not always kept.

Mr. Langton was framed for contemplation, and all his friends agreed that he was utterly unfitted for any kind of activity. Yet I have heard that there was no better officer than he when encamped on Warley Common with the Lincolnshire Militia. He obeyed the imperious call of duty despite natural disposition and

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ingrained habit. At one time he thought of accepting an offer to undertake the education of the young Princes, but declined it, not on account of the labour entailed by so engrossing a post. He told me that at two o'clock every day he felt such a failure of his intellectual powers as to disperse all his ideas, but regained them on taking a little nourishment. He often quitted the dinner-table fasting but unconscious of the fact, such were the unceasing flow of his conversation and the calls made on him by other guests.

In view of educating his children at home he settled down in Westminster with the determination to live quietly and devote his whole time to them. He told my father that his sons and daughters were to have the same curriculum ; he intended to make the girls such perfect Greek scholars that one might read Homer aloud to her five sisters while they sewed and embroidered. But St. James's Park was close at hand, and his friends preached at the Chapel Royal ; he was eagerly looked

for at Levées, and his wife was equally indispensable at Drawing-Rooms. However firmly he might resolve to fly from society, he could not possibly lead a sequestered life. He was convinced of the impossibility by King George the Third's reiterated question, "How goes the education?" followed by the warning that "A little learning is a dangerous thing." Although Mr. Langton was always ready to joke about his unusual height, he was a little annoyed by a reference to it made by our late Sovereign at a Review near Ashford. "I suppose you have been staying with Lord — ; he has got a sweet dirty hole in the country ; but it is a comfort to think that, if you had sunk into the mud, your long legs would have pulled you out again !" On the other hand, he told us the following story. During a very severe winter, every blank wall in London displayed advertisements from rival tailors offering loose great-coats to suit customers of all sizes. Mr. Langton went to the shop of one of the competitors and found a short,

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thick-set person there, bent on the same errand. The tailor could not fit either of them from his stock, and in answer to their remonstrances he said, "Gentlemen, I make great-coats for customers of all sizes, but not for hop-sacks and hop-poles." Mr. Langton's stature would not attract so much attention nowadays as it did forty years ago. Those who witnessed a parade of the Guards at St. James's Palace about the time of the American War, must recollect that the officers' wigs were dressed with curls and a long plaited queue loaded with *maréchale* powder, that they wore delicate white gaiters and that their cambric handkerchiefs were redolent of scent. That was a time when young men of fashion took a sedan chair to mount Opera-guard, and called it "Service." The increase in the height of our countrymen attests the superior good sense with which children are now reared.

But, oh ! that I could sketch Mr. Langton's elegant features, and his sweet smile as he sat with one leg twisted round the other and his

hands locked over a knee ; and depict the gold-mounted snuff-box which he produced from a waistcoat pocket as soon as conversation began !

I owe the following details of Mr. Langton's last illness to Dr. Mackie, who had attended him at Southampton. Our friend, he said, had taken a good house in Anspach Place near the warm baths, where Dr. Mackie was summoned to treat him for a severe cold. He found Mr. Langton very weak and complaining of being "overtopped." Paregoric was prescribed, and the patient took a large overdose which set up violent inflammation of the lungs and carried him off in a few days. He was buried in St. Michael's Church, where a tablet to his memory quotes Dr. Johnson's wish, *Sit anima mea cum Langtono*.

The well-known Saunders Welch was a man of obscure origin who had inherited some property in the county of Bucks. He became what we now call a "Police Magistrate," presiding in one of the London Courts in

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rotation with other stipendiaries. He was a perfect gentleman in person, mind and manners ; I used to open my eyes widely when he appeared at our house in full dinner dress—a richly laced coat, bag-wig, sword and *chapeau-bras*. It is generally known that the sculptor Roubillac took his leg and foot as models for those of his statue of Handel in Vauxhall Gardens. Mr. Welch had a decided taste for literature and art ; he loved to see his house the resort of persons who had won distinction in either. He was praised by the Secretary of State for the intrepidity he showed in preventing a mob from demolishing the beautiful wall of Bedford House, with its noble gates adorned with sphinxes and opening on a spacious courtyard far better suited to its occupant's rank than the sunk areas and paltry railings of our fashionable residences. The house itself was a long, white, two-storied building, occupying the whole northern side of Bloomsbury Square. During the old Duke's time it was admirably kept up in harmony

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with the snowy liveries of his servants. It had many noble apartments, opening on a large garden with views of Hampstead and Highgate Hills.

Mr. Welch's amiable wife died young, after exacting from him a promise never to marry again, which he kept despite his inclinations, and led a life of blameless morality among people who were, many of them, quite the reverse. I do not remember ever seeing him laugh ; but he was cheerful, and had much to tell of men whose follies he viewed with tolerant regret. Of such was Henry Fielding,* who used to account for his extravagance by explaining that he never knew the difference between sixpence and a shilling. The Rev. Mr. Evans, of St. Olave's, Southwark, gave me another instance of the great novelist's failing. Hearing one day that some intimate was in very low spirits he asked the reason and learnt that he was hopelessly in debt. "Is that

* Henry Fielding (1707-54), novelist. His *Tom Jones* was published 1749.

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all?" exclaimed Fielding, "you surprise me by saying that he minded it; how happy would I be if I could find means of getting £500 deeper in debt than I am at present!"

Mr. Welch was left a widower with two infant daughters; and his death-bed promise precluding him from doing what would have been best for him and them, they were brought up in a very desultory fashion. The eldest, a very beautiful girl, was placed under the care of Mrs. Lennox, an eccentric person who encouraged her pupil's love of finery; but it must be admitted that Miss Welch made a figure of distinguished elegance on settling down to manage her father's household. When the sun of youth was declining, she married the sculptor Nollekens,* but was still so lovely that the Marquis of Rockingham remarked to her husband, "We shall now know from whom you copy Venus." Marriage made a great difference in Mrs. Nollekens's appearance.

* Joseph Nollekens (1737-1823), married Saunders Welch's daughter, 1772.

“For my shape,” as she said, she had dieted herself for years on vegetables and that meagre beverage called “Imperial,” but now she rapidly attained a bulk which made one’s heart ache for the penance in whalebone she must have endured ; and she excused her negligence by saying, “It is of small importance at my time of life whether I am two or three inches more or less round the waist.” Mrs. Nollekens was a stupid woman. Instruction ran from her mind as water runs off marble, and despite the advantages of wealth she remained illiterate until her dying day. But I may possibly raise this lady in my readers’ estimation when I mention the fact, on her sister’s authority, that she was the original of “Pekuah” in Johnson’s *Rasselas*.

Her husband was a very rough diamond ; his exterior, manners and conversation belied the genius which he undoubtedly possessed as an artist. It is told of him that, on presenting to the Royal Academy a picture of his own painting which represented Abraham

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entertaining the angels, he discoursed on his mode of treating the subject in a confused manner, ending abruptly with, "You see, they are saying, How d'ye do? Abraham-like!" Yet this simpleton was a sculptor of great ability. His "Venus chiding Cupid," his statue of William Pitt and his busts will keep his memory green for centuries to come. Nollekens never seemed to be conscious of any difficulty. I have heard people say, who had watched the dust and fragments of marble flying about his head as he worked, that the ease with which he produced a desired effect tempted them to exclaim, "Give me your chisel and I will do the same!" With such a wife as he possessed he did not improve in temper or manners. Her fortune was settled upon herself and the pair kept separate purses. He insisted on her meeting all the household expenses, and they were constantly at loggerheads as to the items which fell or did not fall within that category. Mrs. Nollekens used to boast of her economy, but she carried it

too far. Some visitors who were *pro formâ* asked to stay for dinner but hesitated before accepting, heard her tell the cook, "Don't make the pudding till the last moment, as perhaps they won't stay !"

Mr. Welch's younger daughter, Ann by name, was the reverse of her sister in person and in intellect. She mastered seven languages, was a good mathematician, painted, and played the guitar. Such accomplishments made "Little Nanny," as she was called, very attractive, despite her plain features. An unusually intelligent young footman in her father's service gave him notice, and on being asked the reason, said, "The fact is, sir, that I find Miss Ann's conversation at table so delightful that I can attend to nothing else. Indeed, I am deeply in love with her, and think it best for all parties that I should quit." Mrs. Welch * was quite at home in the literary circle that frequented her father's house ; and came

* In those days unmarried ladies of a certain age were given the brevet rank of "Mrs."

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under the influence of Dr. Johnson. If we spoke of dress she called it "apparel"; she used the word "esculents" for vegetables; money was "current coin," a household account-book a "Diary of expenditure," and servants were "domestics." It was commonly said that she imitated Johnson, but I believe that any resemblance was no more imitation than the habit which gives a Scotch or Irish accent to strangers who live much with the people of those countries. Lady Rothes, a native of Suffolk, was another instance of an unintentional acquirement; and Mrs. Piozzi, from living much in Johnson's company, had caught his tones to perfection, though they sat very ill on her little French person. Mrs. Welch might have gained a high position in the bluestocking clan if she had possessed a grain of vanity; but she never affected superiority or singularity; and always seemed diffident in speaking, as soon as she found that she was listened to with attention. Mrs. Piozzi, better known to the world as Mrs. Thrale, was

a complete contrast to Mrs. Welch,* but she was as much a contrast to herself as to any one. From Dr. Johnson's petulant censure it would appear that she varied her costume frequently, and to me she seemed a Frenchwoman who was indebted to her own hands for the roses of her complexion. I admit with admiration that she had a luminous mind. When Mr. Thrale's death made a vacancy in the parliamentary representation of Southwark, a friend of Mr. H. Thornton, who was canvassing on his behalf, called on the widow to solicit her influence. She said, "I wish your friend well and think he will come in for two parliaments, but if he stands a third time the Southwark people will say, 'Not this man but Barabbas'!" I helped my father in his task of sorting Dr. Johnson's letters as executor, and can say with perfect truth that they showed the tenderest regard for his friend's feelings. One

* Hester Lynch Salusbury (1741-1821), married Henry Thrale, a wealthy brewer, 1763. After his death (1781), she married a musician, Gabriel Piozzi, 1784.

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of them was in reply to the Doctor's objurgations on Mrs. Thrale's second marriage ; after singing Mr. Piozzi's praises it proceeded, " My second husband is a gentleman, which is more than can be said of my first." These words seem reprehensible, but their truth cannot be gainsaid, inasmuch as a profession constitutes gentility while a trade does *not*. It was I who discovered this letter, and my father returned it to Mrs. Piozzi, with whom he was not personally acquainted.

THE JOHNSON CIRCLE—GOLD-
SMITH, BOSWELL AND OTHERS

CHAPTER VIII

THE JOHNSON CIRCLE—GOLDSMITH, BOSWELL AND OTHERS

Goldsmith's projected visit to Aleppo ; his " Animated Nature " ; how he secured a Vandyke portrait ; how he spent money advanced for a History of England.—Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore ; his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.—Sir J. Hawkins's stories of Shenstone's ignorance of rural life ; " O Nanny, wilt thou go with me ? " ; Johnson's rudeness.—Boswell's introduction to the Johnson circle ; his thick skin and vanity, absent from Johnson's deathbed.—Why Sir John Hawkins undertook the Life of Johnson ; superiority of Boswell's Biography.—Dr. Taylor, Prebend of Westminster ; unworthy of Johnson's friendship.—Tom Davies, actor, afterwards book-seller ; small profits from Hawkins's *History of Music*.—Davies's umbrageous temper.—Mrs. Williams, who kept house for Johnson ; her dress, figure and character ; able to make tea although blind. Johnson's black servant, Frank Barber ; his dishonesty, extravagance and obstructiveness.—Hardships endured by Hawkins in carrying out his duties as Johnson's executor.

ON Dr. Goldsmith's * expressing an inclination to visit Aleppo for the purpose of bringing back some of the mechanical inventions in use there, Dr. Johnson said, "Goldsmith will go to Aleppo and he will bring back a frame for grinding knives which he will think a convenience peculiar to Aleppo." When Goldsmith's *Animated Nature* came out Johnson remarked, "You are not to infer from this compilation that Goldsmith has any knowledge of the subject. If he knows that a cow has horns, it is as much as he knows."

I had the following anecdote from Mr. Langton. Goldsmith happening to stop at a roadside inn, noticed a venerable portrait hanging in the parlour, which he strongly suspected was by an Old Master. Finding that the landlady had no knowledge of its value, Goldsmith told her that it resembled his aunt Salisbury, and that he would like to be a purchaser. So they struck a bargain at a

* Oliver Goldsmith, man of letters (1728-74).

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price infinitely below the picture's worth. Goldsmith took it away and found to his delight that it was a genuine and very saleable Vandyke. Mr. Cadell* told me that Goldsmith agreed with a group of London publishers, including himself, to compile a History of England for five hundred guineas, to be paid a year after publication. After signing the contract, Goldsmith went to Cadell and represented that he was in dire need of money and in danger of being arrested at the suit of his tradesmen. Cadell immediately called a meeting of his colleagues, whom he persuaded to advance the whole or a great part of the £525. Goldsmith duly received the money, but Cadell's suspicion was aroused. He followed him to Hyde Park Corner and saw him enter a post-chaise in which a lady of easy virtue was waiting, and drive off on the western road. Cadell afterwards learnt that his destination was Bath, where he squandered the

* Thomas Cadell (1742-1802), apprenticed to Andrew Millar, whose business he acquired (1767).

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money received under pretence of satisfying his creditors.

It was, I believe, my father who suggested to Dr. Percy * the compilation of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. After the latter became Bishop of Dromore, Sir John Hawkins urged him to undertake a new edition ; but Dr. Percy disclaimed any further interest in the book, saying that he had infinitely more pleasure in getting a grant of money for the Government to build two churches in his diocese than he would derive from the increased popularity of the *Reliques*. He had a very high opinion of my father ; I remember his saying when he joined us one morning in St. James's Park, " I love to ask you a question, Sir John, for if you can't tell me offhand what I want to know, you can always tell me where to search for it." He gave us some curious particulars of Shenstone,† the wailing poet of

* Dr. Thomas Percy (1729-1811), Bishop of Dromore. Edited *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1765.

† William Shenstone (1714-63), poet, helped Dr. Percy in compiling the *Reliques*, and beautified his own estate known as the " Leaseowes."

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the "Leaseowes," who seems to be wellnigh as forgotten as the artificial paradise he created. He was finical to excess in his love of rural life ; when he thought of buying a cow, he would pay attention to nothing but the spots on her hide ; if they pleased him, her other points were disregarded. Dr. Percy shone in conversation, though I am not prepared to assert that he was a profound scholar. I have heard that his ballad, " O Nanny, wilt thou go with me ? " was addressed to his charming wife on her return to him after a year's confinement in the nursery of H.R.H. Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of Kent. The patience with which he endured Johnson's gross discourtesy was, perhaps, the fruit of Christian forbearance and pity for the Doctor's infirmities.

I can remember Boswell's entrance on the Johnsonian stage. His " earwiggling " soon began to attract attention, and my father asked Mr. Langton who this new performer was, meaning to be on good terms with him as a frequenter of Bolt Court. The answer he

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received was against opening our door to Boswell. His visits were described as interminable, he carried a night-cap in his pocket, so to speak, was blind to the inconvenience he caused and deaf to hints that his departure would be a blessing. Mr. Langton gave this information with his usual humility, and a smile such as no other countenance ever wore. He went on to confess with perfect truth that he had no right to cast the first stone. Within the compass of a morning visit from Bennet Langton my mother was able to get through her after-breakfast domesticities, drive out for two or three hours, and consider the possibility of postponing dinner. But I never heard any one complain that Mr. Langton's visits were unduly prolonged ; loth as he was to shift his place, the faintest perception that he was an intruder would have wounded him to the quick. We found Boswell otherwise constituted ; but my father and he struck up an acquaintance. When the former's *Life of Johnson* came out Boswell showed some uneasiness on account of

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a slight which he found it difficult to define. Calling on my father, he complained of the designation given him, " Mr. James Boswell of Auchinleck " ; but could only murmur, " Well, but Mr. James Boswell ; surely, surely ; Mr. James Boswell ! " " I know what you mean," replied my father, " you would have me say that Johnson undertook the Scotch Tour with THE Boswell." He acquiesced in the amendment, but had to leave without any promise that it would figure in subsequent editions.

Was Sir John Hawkins the most competent among Johnson's friends to undertake his biography ? I cannot answer this question with any degree of confidence, but the London booksellers evidently thought so or they would not have sent a deputation asking him to write his friend's life. I have never ceased to wonder at their choice, for Boswell's ambition was strongly suspected, if not declared ; and he asserts that he had Johnson's tacit permission to exhibit him to the public. It is remarkable that Johnson was never influenced

by Boswell's espionage to talk for effect. He certainly calculated the angle at which his words would do most execution ; and familiars might observe a concentration of his forces when he meant to be decisive. I was always ready to cry out, " Now for it ! " on the approach of one of these explosions. Boswell's absence from Johnson's deathbed has never been clearly explained. There was a sort of coquetry in it, and he excuses it in words which savour of the lover rather than the friend. He does not seem to have been wanted at the closing scene, and as far as I know Johnson never mentioned him to my father.

Boswell has a story about a lady who asked a guest at her dinner-table not to cut a mango, because it had cost two shillings ; and who, at the same time, was ruining her husband by extravagance. As Lady Rothes had given a dinner-party at which mangoes were served, she strongly suspected that the slander had been aimed at herself, and asked Boswell why he had put such an untruth into print. His

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explanation was given in the true Johnsonian style : “ Why, Madam, it is no more than is done by landscape painters ; their pictures are after Nature, but they put a tree in the foreground as an embellishment.” Was this man a safe member of Society ? But while I depreciate one who has done far more to depreciate himself, I must not be unjust to Boswell’s *Life of Samuel Johnson*. It is entertaining to a degree which makes my father’s book seem cold, stiff and turgid, indeed I cannot but think it the very worst thing he ever did.

The Countess of Rothes was not Scotch by birth, that was in her favour ; and the accent which she had caught by long residence north of the Tweed offended no one’s ears. She was very handsome, had easy manners and was quite at home in any society, although she showed a higher regard for the distinctions of rank than might have been expected. The sweet, complacent smile with which she treated friends was always welcome ; her features expressed modesty, thought and good sense,

while perfect sincerity gave special value to all her utterances. Once, while suffering under a family bereavement in which she felt herself neglected by an intimate friend, she received a letter from her full of hackneyed excuses for her silence. Lady Rothes told me that she would answer this missive by calling on her correspondent, in order to avoid the deviations from perfect sincerity which could not be avoided in a letter. Dr. Johnson was very fond of the Countess's children, who numbered ten without one plain face or faulty form among them. He fully appreciated the fact that they were taught to treat him as a grandfather.

Of the many uncouth friendships formed by Johnson, his intimacy with Dr. Taylor would have been the least creditable had it not begun in youth and adversity. I have heard of proceedings in Chancery which proved Taylor's moral character to have been entirely inconsistent with his profession. He was a strange sort of man ; I would call him eccentric

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were it not that the epithet implies a disposition to fly off at a tangent, while all his movements were ponderous. In Westminster, where he had a prebend, he lived as a dignitary of the Church in a handsome house and kept his chariot.

Mr. Thomas Davies, better known by the sociable appellation, "Tom Davies," was quite a character in his way.* Every one knew that he had been an actor, and had subsequently set up a bookseller's shop in Russell Street, Covent Garden, which became the resort of literary men. There was a question of his publishing my father's *History of Music*, but negotiations for this purpose fell through. My father did not expect to make a fortune out of this book ; I heard him say that he would deem himself fortunate if he got the price of a pair of carriage horses by fifteen years' labour. Davies had an intractable and umbrageous temper. One summer evening my father sent

* Thomas Davies (d. 1785), said to have been driven from the Drury Lane stage by a sneer in Churchill's *Rosciad*. Introduced Boswell to Johnson.

him a civil invitation to tea by one of my brothers ; and this was his reply, “ Does your father take me for a tailor or a shoemaker, that he sends for me in this manner ? ” Davies never lost the strut of the Stage ; he practised it on this occasion and in his shop.

I remember Mrs. Anna Williams as clearly as I remember any one. She was a well-bred gentlewoman, and conferred credit on Dr. Johnson’s *ménage* by residing in his house, her only home. Before he was engulfed by Streatham he often brought her to dine with us. I can see her now—a pale, shrunken old lady, dressed in scarlet after the handsome French fashion of the day, with a lace cap showing two stiffened wings over her temples, and a black lace hood partly concealing her grey or powdered hair. It has been alleged that Mrs. Williams had a fiery Welsh temper ; it might have been excited by the meaner inhabitants of Johnson’s upper floor, but I can never forget her uniform kindness towards myself, nor the high moral rectitude which

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always shone in her conversation. In those days it was thought something wonderful that she should be able to make tea without the help of eyesight. I have heard that she used to ascertain the height of the liquid in a teacup by actual touch, but as I love her memory I hope she appealed to the exterior.

The immortalised Frank Barber, Dr. Johnson's black manservant, did not deserve the reflected credit which he has received. I know as a fact that he took bribes from George Steevens for refusing to admit other callers while Steevens was closeted with Johnson, discussing his edition of Shakespeare* ; and I believe that he sold intelligence to Boswell. My father, while engaged in carrying Johnson's will into effect, was obstructed in every way by Barber. I saw him, with the insolence of a hackney coachman, toss some halfpence into the air which he said were all that remained of a large sum entrusted to him. In fact he spent

* George Steevens (1736-1800), commentator on Shakespeare, involved in constant disputes with literary associates.

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money as fast as he received it, and thought nothing of saddling my father with liabilities for which he might have been called to account as executor. While the arrangements for Johnson's funeral were in hand, Frank Barber insisted on a seat in one of the mourning coaches being given to a low connection of his wife. My father wisely gave way to his importunity, thinking that gradations of rank might be disregarded in such a ceremony, the large attendance proving that no ordinary man's remains were being carried to the mausoleum of royalty, genius and learning. Few of our friends realised all that my father endured in fulfilling the last duties of steady and unobtrusive friendship. They were carried out in the depth of the severest winter in my recollection, when none but hackney carriage-horses could be risked in the streets of London. My father made light of every difficulty ; he was seldom at home in the daytime and we were happy if we saw him return before midnight.

SOME LONDON SILHOUETTES



MRS. ROBINSON (*Perdita*)

From a painting by George Romney.

CHAPTER IX

SOME LONDON SILHOUETTES

Two sirens ; “ Perdita ” Robinson, her beauty, costume and equipages, her worthless husband ; appearance on the stage, her ambition thwarted, a hopeless paralytic.—Emma, Lady Hamilton ; bewitches Lord Nelson, his piety and domestic life before meeting her ; her early career as maidservant ; she becomes the mistress of Mr. Greville and marries his uncle, Sir William Hamilton ; secures the friendship of Queen Caroline of the Two Sicilies.—The “ No Popery ” riots of 1780 ; personal experiences ; mobs in Whitehall, attack on Lord Mansfield’s house which is destroyed owing to his obstinacy, firmness of the Duke of Northumberland, flight of the Hawkins family ; suppression of the riots.—Hatton Street formerly a fashionable quarter.—Nightingales in Birdcage Walk.—Old Chelsea ; purchases of Sir Hans Sloane, Beaufort House, Henry the Eighth’s Palace, Sir Hans as an employer.—Vauxhall Gardens, kettledrum performers, origin of the Gardens ; very light refreshments, a model barmaid.

THE notorious "Perdita" Robinson * attracted our notice early in her career by residing in the same street as ourselves. She was very beautiful, but more so in face than in figure, and delighted in ever-varying costumes. She was seen daily driving in her chariot through St. James's Street and Pall Mall ; sometimes in the character of a *paysanne* with a straw hat tied at the back of her head, anon attired as a St. James's Park belle, powdered, patched and painted to the utmost capacity of rouge and white-lead ; and sometimes as a cravatted amazon. In whatever character she appeared one saw the hats of fashionable promenaders sweeping the ground as she drove or rode by. I saw her one Sunday perched on a high phaeton which was driven by the favourite of the day, with three other admirers and her husband as outriders ; and this in the face of congregations leaving

* Mary Robinson (1758-1800), widely known as "Perdita," *née* Darby, married Thomas Robinson, 1774 ; one of Garrick's company at Drury Lane, 1775 ; mistress of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV, 1778.

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church ! Mr. Robinson was the natural son of a man of rank ; he had been bred to the Bar, but was incorrigibly idle and dissipated ; so much so that he was confined in the King's Bench prison, where his father sent him a guinea a week for maintenance. I have heard that Mrs. Robinson's conduct was very meritorious ere she strayed from the path of virtue. In the depths of poverty to which the pair were reduced she nursed her child, did all the house-work, even scrubbing the stairs ; and thankfully accepted the temporary employment which Robinson had refused with contempt.

About the year 1778 Mrs. Robinson appeared on the stage, and soon gained the affix " Perdita " from the character in which she took the town by storm. She started house-keeping in one of the new streets in Marylebone ; and afterwards resided in Berkeley Square under the protection of a man who introduced her to friends as mistress of his house and his heart. She now aspired to an aristocratic marriage and offered her husband

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a large sum of money on condition of a divorce being arranged ; but both schemes failed. I saw her one day being handed out of her gorgeous *vis-à-vis* by a man whom she pursued with a doting passion. All seemed well with her, and Bond Street loungers pirouetted as usual when her carriage rolled by ; but next day it was seized by the maker ; her lover fled, and she followed him to no purpose. Years passed by, and at the Opera one evening I saw " Perdita " seated at a table in one of the waiting-rooms. Though still beautiful she attracted nothing but looks of pity from people leaving the house ; for two liveried servants came in who, drawing long white sleeves over their arms, carried poor paralysed " Perdita " to her carriage.

I should be guilty of an oversight if I omitted stating what I know of a woman whose name will go down to posterity with those of Aspasia, Laïs and Cleopatra. I allude to Emma, Lady Hamilton* ; and in speaking

* Lady Hamilton, *née* Lyon, married Sir William Hamilton

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of her I must mention the great commander who succumbed to her fascination. Mrs. Welch was on intimate terms with a family nearly related to Lord Nelson's, who in the earlier part of his career treated their house as his home while on shore. He then lived in complete harmony with Mrs. Nelson, and showed real affection for his stepson. On Sunday, when the weather did not admit of attendance at church, Captain Nelson used to read prayers to the household with a fervour which proved him to be the worthy son of a worthy parish priest. He joined the congregation of St. George's, Hanover Square, even on week-days, and after losing an arm he was seen to place a note on the reading-desk stating that "A person having received great mercies desires to return thanks." What has his seductress to answer for, and well might Lord Nelson groan, "I would give the world that I had never seen Naples !"

British Plenipotentiary at Naples, 1791 ; intimate with Queen Marie Caroline, 1793 ; with Lord Nelson, 1798. Imprisoned for debt, but escaped to Calais, where she died in 1815.

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I learnt some facts regarding Lady Hamilton's début from the sister of a lady who had lived in Wales, and whose service she entered as nursery-maid under the name of Emma Hart. Her mother and grandmother were then alive, and the latter, Mrs. Lyon by name, used to drive an ass daily on errands to Liverpool. Before taking domestic service, Miss Hart's business was to read the newspaper and spout Shakespeare to frequenters of several public houses. She did not remain long in her first situation, which she left under a cloud and without a character. Coming to London she obtained another in a family who lived in Pall Mall and kept a second maidservant ; but both girls were discharged on account of misconduct, and Emma Hart's fortunes sunk to a very low ebb. Meeting her companion in misfortune, she told her that she actually contemplated selling her teeth. "Why sell your beautiful teeth," asked the damsel, "when there are such houses as I can tell you of?" Emma obtained a friendly



National Portrait Gallery.

Reynolds.

EMMA LADY HAMILTON.

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address, and forthwith entered on a career of gallantry.

The first mention of this celebrated beauty came to me from a lady who mixed in the world of rank and fashion, and was acquainted with Emma's first regular protector, Mr. Charles Greville. He told my friend that he had spent £30 on his mistress's white jackets and petticoats—the morning *déshabillé* of that day—and that she should have nothing more from him. But her beauty, accomplishments and taste soon raised her to a more exalted sphere. I will not follow her to Naples, where she figured as the wife of our Ambassador, beyond recording the manner in which she gained the friendship of Caroline, Queen of the Two Sicilies. The latter's husband, King Ferdinand, fell head over ears in love with Lady Hamilton, and wrote offering her *carte-blanche*. Now, she never sinned through frailty ; there was always an element of calculation in her love affairs. She showed the royal missive to Queen Caroline, whose gratitude for the

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confidence knew no bounds. She offered Lady Hamilton any favour within her power to grant as a reward for her virtuous action, and was told that the Ambassadors sought only an introduction to her Court which had hitherto been denied on account of her ambiguous past. "Not to the Court alone," was the Queen's reply, "but to my private parties and at all times !"

My recollections of the "No Popery" riots of June 1780 is particularly vivid.* While returning with my mother from a morning call in South London, our carriage passed a large assembly gathered round the Obelisk in St. George's Fields, which we took

* An Act relieving Catholics from some of their disabilities, passed 1778, led to the formation of a Protestant Association with Lord George Gordon as President. Obtaining no redress from Parliament, the wirepullers organised rioting, and for several days London lay at the mercy of mob rule. Order was restored by George III, of whom Dr. Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale, "There has, indeed, been a general panic, from which the King was the first that recovered. Without the concurrence of his ministers or the assistance of the civil magistrates, he put the soldiers in motion, and saved the town from calamities such as a rabble's government must necessarily produce." Lord George Gordon died in Newgate, 1793.

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for a beanfeast. We reached our house without molestation, and had dressed for a dinner at Mr. Langton's, when my brother Henry came in, hot from Westminster, with very exciting news. The Hall had been invaded by an immense mob, while others blocked every approach to the House of Lords. The law courts at once rose, and on his way home Henry met a procession of rioters marching up Whitehall, and driving back every nobleman's carriage which was on its way to Parliament. Some peers who were supposed to be friendly to the popular side received gentle treatment ; Henry saw Lord Fortescue taken out of his carriage and kissed by a number of old women in the procession, but others were roughly handled. We still had no idea of personal danger, and were preparing to enter our carriage when the coachman came in to tell us that a lady who lived in our neighbourhood had been stopped by a mob near Charing Cross and compelled to huzza for " Lord George Gordon and no Popery ! " We, therefore,

remained at home, and next day heard that the Guards had declared that, if ordered to fire on the people, they would certainly avoid bloodshed. This news increased our anxiety on behalf of Sir John Hawkins, who had left home for his magisterial duties at the Guildhall, and did not return for dinner.

His absence was caused by an urgent message from Lord Mansfield * directing him to come to his house in Bloomsbury Square, as he had good reason to apprehend an attack. My father proceeded there at once with some constables. On arriving, he found that the rioters had promised to pay a visit to the Chief Justice, and a crowd of spectators had assembled to witness the impending mischief. His lordship was in a dire quandary, but fell in with Sir John's suggestion that some Guards should be summoned. A company arrived in the Square and, had they been judiciously posted, they would undoubtedly have repelled

* William Murray, 1st Earl of Mansfield (1705-93), Lord Chief Justice, 1756-88.

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the attack. But Lord Mansfield insisted on their occupying the vestry of St. George's Church—quite out of sight of his house. In vain did the Commanding Officer protest against so absurd a disposition. Lord Mansfield proved obdurate, with the result that his house was sacked and destroyed in an incredibly short space of time. One of the young ladies of his family stayed there until she saw her grand pianoforte thrown on a bonfire made of the books and furniture, together with a large silver tankard containing guineas ! Mean-time my father received a verbal message purporting to come from the Duke of Northumberland * requesting him to come to his house at Charing Cross. He consulted Lord Mansfield and the Archbishop of York—who had received a similar warning, but kept his head—pointing out that he could be of little

* Sir Hugh Smithson, Bart. (1715-86), married Elizabeth Seymour, heiress of the Percies, 1740, and was created Duke of Northumberland, 1766. As Lord-Lieutenant of Middlesex he opposed Wilkes's election, 1768 ; but was forced by the mob to drink his health.

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assistance in Bloomsbury unless the Guards were properly stationed. It needed his own casting-vote to ensure active exertion, and he followed the Duke's messenger.

On his way to Northumberland House he met a large party of rioters fresh from the destruction of Newgate, who were preceded by the deep-toned prison bell which they flaunted as part of their spoils. They did not interfere with the guardian of the peace which they were breaking, and my father arrived at his destination in safety. The Duke's reception was unexpected ; he said, " I am very happy to see you, but how happens it you have come ? " My father replied that it was in obedience to the Duke's summons ; but he had no recollection of having sent for Sir John, nor could the messenger offer any explanation of what he had done. We were all thankful for the mistake, which kept my father in safety and saved him from the risk he would have run in attempting to cope with the mob in Bloomsbury. Now, how did

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his Grace of Northumberland behave in an emergency? He was a man who had had as few opportunities of displaying firmness as any person in so exalted a station; and my father knew that he had purchased the safety of his windows on previous occasions at the price of a butt of porter. He had sent for a company of Guards to protect his house which was threatened with destruction, and he asked my father what he considered the best way of dealing with the mob. The advice he received was to have the soldiers drawn up in the courtyard, facing the Strand, and to throw the gates open on receiving the first summons from the rioters. These precautions probably prevented an attack on Northumberland House, but, while supping with the Duke, my father heard that Lord Mansfield's had been destroyed. His Grace then proposed retirement for the night and very politely said, "Lord Percy's bed is ready for you." His offer was accepted, and my father lay down in his clothes. To our

inexpressible joy he returned home at seven o'clock next morning ; but the parish curate came in to tell us that our house was doomed, and sure enough its street door was marked with the figure 8, which portended destruction. We, therefore, set to work removing our furniture, clothes, books and pictures to a neighbour's house, kindly placed at our disposal, and left our own stripped of everything but bedsteads and fixtures. We then drove to Clapton, where some friends had offered an asylum, passing *en route* the Hampshire Militia which was marching along the New Road with a train of artillery. That night I counted seven conflagrations lighting up the sky of London ; it was an appalling sight !

On the morrow we learnt that vigorous measures had been taken to restore order with the aid of military force. Thus were the rioters brought under control, and we stand indebted to this tremendous commotion for the better order of things that prevails to-day.

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Hatton Street was greatly esteemed as a residence by gentlefolk when we took up our abode there. No shops were allowed except at the lower end, and few situations could vie with it. Our house overlooked a good private garden and the fields on which Pentonville was subsequently built. But the whole site has been ruined by trade and low associations. In those days Bedford Row ranked above Hatton Street as a place of residence ; and then arose Bedford and Russell Squares, to the depreciation of Great Russell Street. Newman Street has now become a drug, and Berners Street is fast yielding up its dignity.

Forty years ago the Birdcage Walk, on the south side of St. James's Park, was still a quiet and delightful promenade, but its foliage and shade were inferior to what they had been in the memory of old Lady Lucy Meyrick. While walking there one day with me she said, " I knew the time when, if there was one nightingale here there were a

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thousand." A by-passer turned round, and with a look that spoke his meaning, said, "Yes, yes, I believe it; if there was one nightingale here there *was* a thousand."

I had some particulars of Chelsea in former times from an old man named Howard, who had been in Sir Hans Sloane's employment. He told me that Beaufort House, which stood between the King's Road and the river, was a building of no magnificence, and hardly equal to the great extent of land surrounding it. It had a projecting porch in front with six large bay and casemented windows on either side; the roof had four pediments, each enclosing a window, and was crowned with a clock-turret. About 1737 it was purchased by Sir Hans Sloane* who allowed Howard to occupy it, but made him account for every pennyworth of garden produce. Not finding a tenant, he sold the materials to two men who

* Sir Hans Sloane, Bart. (1660-1753), purchased the Manor of Chelsea, 1721, and founded its Botanic Garden. His collections were bought by Parliament, 1754, and formed the nucleus of the British Museum.

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began to pull the house down, but failed to pay the purchase-money agreed on ; so Sir Hans ordered Howard to complete the demolition. He is still remembered in Chelsea. The burial-ground in the King's Road was given to the parish by him ; there is a tradition that the site was at first intended to be covered with houses, but when the ground was broken the foundations of a church came to light, with a quantity of human bones ; whence it was conjectured that it was consecrated ground. Another of Sir Hans Sloane's purchases was a palace of King Henry VIII, where Princess Elizabeth spent her childhood ; one of the rooms was within Howard's memory called " Queen Elizabeth's Nursery." When the Bishops of Winchester left Southwark, they occupied half of this palace with a separate courtyard. The other half, formerly Lord Cheney's manor house, was bought by Sir Hans as a residence, and there he died. According to Howard he was a very just employer but in no degree liberal. He did

not remunerate Howard for his elaborate drawings and measurements of Beaufort House ; and though he said that Howard's office as superintendent of the Chelsea estate would not stand in his way as a surveyor, yet he never gave him a day's leave of absence. At one time Sir Hans used Lady Cremorne's house, higher up the river, as a retreat, and he often dined there on eggs and bacon or tripe and parsley. He was the first English physician to receive a baronetcy, which he got from George I on his accession.

My father was very fond of Vauxhall Gardens * where at any time he had the command of an excellent band of music. It was indeed a treat to see Nelson beating the kettledrums, but when the Earl of Sandwich † officiated, his performance excited my

* Vauxhall Gardens, in Lambeth and opposite Millbank, became a place of public resort at the Restoration ; but their vogue began 1732, with the ownership of Jonathan Tyers. Closed 1859, and now built over.

† John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718-92), First Lord of the Admiralty, 1771-82 ; an unscrupulous politician of dissolute manners, nicknamed "Jemmy Twitcher."

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contempt, though I ought to have reflected that Nelson's grand attitudes and unembarrassed flourishes would have been out of place in the First Lord of the Admiralty. These gardens belonged at one time to Sir Samuel Morland, whose son, as Mr. Evelyn relates, built a large room in the garden, much admired, in which there was a Punchinello holding a dial. Their beauty commended itself to the enterprising Jonathan Tyers, who bought the gardens and made them a place of public resort, of which I have heard my mother say that the fascination to be found there made it impossible to end the day anywhere else. The price of admission included a choice of light refreshments, and very light they were ! Sir John Hawkins highly relished the humour displayed by one of the waiters who was carrying a plate of ham with feigned anxiety to preserve its contents from being blown away by a gentle evening breeze. My parents became acquainted with the lady who presided at the refreshment bar. She was very beautiful and

well-mannered ; her dress was a pattern of decorum ; and she had much good sense and knowledge of the world. I have seen several members of the Royal Family in conversation with her, and no frequenter of the Gardens failed to treat her with respect. Such was the esteem in which she was held that her friends did not give her up after she had retired to enjoy a well-earned independence.

THE FRENCH COURT FROM
WITHIN, 1760-92



LOUIS DE FRANCE

DAUPHIN.

CHAPTER X

THE FRENCH COURT FROM WITHIN, 1760-92

Count Jarnac settles at Twickenham ; his ancestry ; playmate of the royal princes ; death of the Duke of Burgundy.—Jarnac enters the Household Cavalry ; is punished for doing his duty.—His stable of English horses, his marriages and children.—A bride for Louis XV ; failure of negotiations with a Bavarian Princess ; choice of Marie Leczinska.—Her father, Stanislas, ex-King of Poland ; his good taste, economy and generosity ; his tragic death.—Tact of the Dauphine Josépha.—The Dauphin Louis ; his character ; travels with excessive speed.—The Duc de Vauguyon becomes governor of the young princes ; has a disastrous influence on the future King Louis XVI.—Illness of the Dauphin ; etiquette in the death-chamber ; bids farewell to Jarnac ; would have been a good, but not a great, king ; not a priest-ridden bigot.

IN 1806 I made the acquaintance of a very interesting *émigré* from France in the person of Count Jarnac, who settled near us at Twickenham,* and used to spend

* Miss Hawkins returned to Twickenham in 1793, and set up house with her brother Henry at 2 Sion Row.

most of his evenings at our house. He had the ease of manner which sets every one else at ease, coupled with the inbred dignity of a grand Seigneur ; and was prodigal of information regarding Court life in France before the Revolution. Count Jarnac was a scion of the illustrious House of Rohan, which would have succeeded to the Crown of Navarre had Henry IV died without male issue. He belonged to the Rohan-Chabot branch, and set higher value on the Chabot line than on the ducal dignity of Rohan. His father was the Duc de Rohan-Chabot, and his mother being an Englishwoman of high family, he spoke our language fluently. At the age of sixteen he was drawn into a conspiracy against the life of Chancellor Maupeou,* who had given great offence to the aristocracy by substituting provincial assemblies for the ancient Parliaments. The wooden palings of a bridge over which he was sure to pass were to be

* René de Maupeou (1714-92), a protégé of Mme. du Barry. As Chancellor of France he suppressed the Parliaments, which, however, were restored to power after his disgrace.

sawn nearly through, and a coachman was heavily bribed to drive his carriage against Maupeou's, forcing it against the palings which would give way and the Chancellor's carriage would be precipitated into the river. His coachman, also in the plot, would escape by swimming and leave his master to drown. At the very last moment, however, the ring-leader was seized with remorse. Declaring that "it looked too much like murder" he persuaded the others to abandon their designs. But the Government had got wind of them; the young conspirators found that they were being watched, and for several days Louis XV displayed a warrant for their arrest sticking out of his coat pocket. Count Jarnac was a royal page at this time, his function being to present the king's morning coffee. He and other youths compromised used to mutter to each other, "Non, non, le roi est trop bon; notre jeunesse, notre faiblesse!" Louis asked what they were talking about; but they dared not reply.

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Count Jarnac was one of four young nobles invited to spend their evenings with the Dauphin's children.* The eldest, styled Duke of Burgundy, was by far the most promising, but he met with a fatal accident at the age of ten. He was being drawn by playmates on a wheeled horse through the apartments at Versailles, and being of a fiery, impetuous disposition, shouted, "Plus vite, plus vite !" In turning a corner his equipage ran violently against an open door, and was upset ; the child suffering serious injury to his hip-joint. The household surgeons came in a crowd to his sick bed, but they differed widely after examining the patient, and each shouted his own opinion. The Dauphin said, " I shall understand you better, gentlemen, if you speak one at a time ; let those who say that there is a dislocation pass to the right of the bed, and those who diagnose a fracture

* The Dauphin Louis (1729-65), only son of Louis XV, had four sons by his second wife, Marie Josépha of Saxony. The eldest, Duc de Bourgogne, died in childhood ; the others reigned in France as Louis XVI, Louis XVIII, and Charles X.

take the other side." This was done, but their disagreement was fatal. With proper treatment the poor boy might have recovered ; he could not survive the ignorance and obstinacy of his surgeons.

Count Jarnac began his military career in the corps of Mousquetaires, or Household Cavalry, which was the army school for youths belonging to the *haute noblesse*. Every trooper provided his own charger, accoutrements and uniform, and their pay was only twenty sous a day, which none of them drew. On a trooper's quitting the regiment, his horse became the perquisite of the Staff, which sold and resold the animals to recruits. On the occasion of a review Count Jarnac was posted on sentinel-duty at one of the barriers, with orders to let no one pass it. M. de Chabannes tried to do so, when Count Jarnac laid his musketoon across his chest. Chabannes knocked it up, and was promptly knocked down. He had considerable interest at Court and Queen Marie Leczinska warmly espoused

his cause, with the result that Count Jarnac, who had only done his duty, suffered a degrading punishment, having to march into Paris at the head of his squadron, bareheaded and deprived of his sword.

At seventeen he became his own master, and although a second son, was given a large income much of which he spent on a stud of English horses which were purchased from Spencer, then a noted dealer in Smithfield. His love for these noble creatures knew no bounds ; he showed me a picture of four greys painted by himself. He also built a fine hôtel in the best quarter of Paris. Marrying while very young, he had a daughter who followed her husband into the revolutionary camp and became estranged from her father. By a second wife he was blessed with a model son in the Vicomte de Jarnac, who married a daughter of the Duke of Leinster, and repaid his father's deep affection with interest. This excellent young man seemed to be Count Jarnac's only link with life.

The Duc de Bourbon, who became Prime Minister in succession to the Regent d'Orleans, found it necessary to secure succession to the Crown, and sent emissaries to every Catholic Court in view of finding a wife for the young King, Louis XV. Mme. de Prie, who was the Duke's mistress in both senses of the word, took an eager part in these negotiations, but resolved that the future Queen of France should be amenable to her will. Very favourable reports were received regarding a Bavarian princess ; but Mme. de Prie determined to test her character personally. She therefore went to Munich under a feigned name, as one of the Ladies-in-Waiting at Versailles who had been sent to ascertain the princess's wishes. On presenting credentials she had a private interview with the young lady, who frankly told her that she hesitated to accept the proffered honour on account of certain stories that had reached her. There was a tyrannical woman named de Prie, she said, who wished to govern the Queen of France as she governed the

Prime Minister ; she would never submit to any such dictation ; and if what she heard was true it would be an insurmountable obstacle to the proposed match. It is needless to add that negotiations fell through. Then Mme. de Prie's choice fell on Princess Marie Leczinska, only daughter of Stanislas, ex-King of Poland, who was living at Chambord on a pension from France. Mme. de Prie had good reason for thinking that she could rely on the subservience of a quiet, plain young person who owed everything to her, and the marriage was celebrated in 1728 to the amazement of Europe. But Queen Marie Leczinska defeated her protectress's designs by reason of her abhorrence for anything savouring of intrigue. Louis XV always cherished a profound respect for her and did justice to her perfect rectitude. Although beset by people whose interest it was to corrupt him, he did not outrage public opinion by his immorality until the Queen was no more.

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The father* of this excellent princess was granted the titular sovereignty of Lorraine by his son-in-law, and resided at Luneville where he has left many proofs of his munificence and good taste. Count Jarnac visited him there, and met with so cordial a reception that he was induced to spend a week at the Palace. Stanislas had great personal charm, his conversation was fascinating, and the miniature Court at Luneville became the centre of a brilliant society. By dint of wise economy he contrived to perform more generous actions than many sovereigns possessing a tenfold greater revenue. The circumstances of his tragic death were thus related by Count Jarnac. The King, although he had grown old and unwieldy, objected strongly to any attendant remaining in the room with him. Knowing this prejudice his daughter, Queen Marie

* Stanislas I (1677-1766) was elected King of Poland 1704, maintained on its thorny throne by Charles XII of Sweden, but lost it on the latter's defeat at Poltava. The Treaty of Vienna (1736) gave him the life sovereignty of Lorraine. Queen Marie Leczinska died in 1768.

Leczinska, ordered one of the picture-frames in his sanctum to be hung on hinges, concealing an aperture which enabled her father to be watched without his knowledge. On a winter day in 1766 Stanislas, wearing a wadded pelisse embroidered by his daughter, and a wadded camisole, stood up in front of a blazing grate in order to wind up a clock on the mantelpiece ; his garments took fire and he was burnt beyond recovery. The Queen of France blamed herself for causing this catastrophe, and it undoubtedly shortened her life.

Count Jarnac knew not how far the Dauphin's inclinations were concerned in the choice of his second wife, Princess Josépha of Saxony. It was certainly an embarrassing situation that the Queen of France should be the daughter of a dethroned King of Poland while the Dauphine stood in the same relation to the reigning sovereign of that country. But both these ladies had plenty of good sense, and the younger one made an excellent impression

on her mother-in-law from the very first. Court etiquette enjoined that a Dauphine of France should wear a bracelet with a miniature of her father-in-law on the first nuptial gala-day, her father's and her husband's portraits following in their turn. On the second day Queen Marie Leczinska perceived that the Dauphine was hiding her bracelet from view, and said, "I suppose you are wearing your father's portrait?" The Princess at once took off her bracelet, and handed it to the Queen, saying, "See for yourself, Madame, every one says it is an excellent likeness." The Queen was most agreeably surprised by finding that it was her own portrait. Neither of them had any pretension to good looks, and both hated intrigue; there was no fear of their falling out after such a proof of the Dauphine's tact and affection.

Count Jarnac was an intimate friend of the Dauphin, and had a great admiration for his noble character—qualified, however, by defects which he described. The Dauphin's temper

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was uncertain and somewhat refractory ; he cordially disliked his father, who in point of fact had no good points whatever. Although he would always resent expressions of disrespect for the king coming from other people, he made no scruple of thwarting him in little things. Every royal residence had its own uniform, which the king's suite and guests were expected to wear ; but the Dauphin always appeared in clothes utterly unlike those prescribed for the palace which he chose to visit. The Dauphins of France had no residence of their own, but enjoyed the right of occupying any royal château that stood vacant, where a detachment of Guards was detailed to attend them. They had no settled revenue ; only the younger princes enjoyed " appanages " in the shape of separate estates for their habitation and maintenance. The Dauphin travelled so fast in moving from palace to palace that attendance on him was a service of danger, particularly within thirty miles of Paris where the roads are paved, rendering a fall from

horseback very serious. As the Prince was entering his carriage the Equerry used to ask, "Ou va, Monsieur le Dauphin?" and on learning the destination asked, "Par quel train?" If the answer was "Par le plus court," the escort set off at full speed. On one occasion Count Jarnac nearly lost his life owing to the excessive pace of the Dauphin's cortège. He was leading the escort on a journey to Compiègne, and had arrived without accident within a league of the town. Darkness had set in, and he failed to perceive a deep hole left unlit and unguarded by men repairing the road. Into this the escort plunged, head over heels, and but for the postilions' presence of mind in pulling up within a few yards of the chasm, the heavy carriage with its eight horses must have come on the top of the struggling mass. Happily no one suffered material injury.

Early in her married life the Dauphine Josépha was sent by her physicians to take the waters at Forges-les-Eaux, where scandal was

the only diversion available by visitors. Her husband began to get disquieting reports regarding her behaviour ; he learnt that the Comte de St. Mégrin, who was a remarkably handsome man, affected to be her *preux chevalier*, and always wore her colours. This amused the Dauphine, but set people's tongues wagging ; and the Dauphin sent a confidential agent to Forges with orders to report on what he observed there. St. Mégrin, getting wind of his arrival, posted off to Versailles, where he appeared at Court and completely vindicated the Dauphine's reputation. She was soon apprised of his championship ; her gratitude knew no bounds ; she promised St. Mégrin her interest and protection, and kept her word. When it was a question of appointing a governor for the four young princes, their mother's choice fell on St. Mégrin, who had become Duc de Vauguyon. Count Jarnac considered this man responsible in large measure for the horrors of the French Revolution. Owing to his base flattery the youth

who was afterwards Louis XVI imbibed notions which ultimately deprived him of his people's love and confidence. After the little Duc of Burgundy's death he was seen kneeling before Prince Louis, whose hands he clasped, murmuring, "Now I am holding the hands of an amiable and gracious Prince who will one day be my master!" As his pupil advanced in years it became evident that his capacity was very limited, and Vauguyon easily made him believe that by consulting his own inclinations he sought the welfare of France. "Just as if the Kingdom," said Count Jarnac, "was a thing he could carry in his pocket, and if *he* were safe France must be safe also!" Louis XVI always identified France with his person and, though better informed than most people, his knowledge was rendered nugatory by ingrained prejudice and its concomitant obstinacy.

In the winter of 1765 the Dauphin became seriously ill, and Count Jarnac visited him within a few days of his death. He found

Court etiquette in full force. The King and Queen alone could approach the bed from the right ; less illustrious visitors advanced to the left and stopped within six feet of it. Count Jarnac, however, was invited to draw nearer, and the dying man gave him his hand to kiss. He bade a last farewell to his friend and asked to be remembered to the Maréchale de Beauvau, a lady for whom he had the highest regard, adding, "*Dites-lui que je meurs son ami.*" The Dauphin drew his last breath on December 8, 1765, in an apartment overlooking the courtyard at Fontainebleau, which was full of carriages waiting to carry the royal family away the instant he should expire. Not recollecting the etiquette on such occasions, he asked what the trampling of horses meant, and heard that the Guards were changing garrison. The Dauphin's smile showed that he saw through the artifice. Soon afterwards a bowl of broth was brought to him of the dimensions then customary in France. The Dauphin said, "If all these gentlemen

have to wait until I have consumed such a vast quantity of soup, they will be very tired of waiting ! ”

I asked Count Jarnac whether he thought that the Dauphin would have proved a wise ruler had he lived to reign, and was answered that he might have made a good, but never a great king. He had imbibed some of the principles of philosophy so-called, but Count Jarnac believed that he afterwards saw their fallacy. It has been said that he was a priest-ridden bigot ; but in estimating the value of such criticisms one must make allowance for their author's bent of mind. Every pious man is a bigot in a sceptic's eyes, and however religious a man may be, his principles are deemed too lax by a fanatic.* Count Jarnac

* According to a comparatively recent biographer, the Dauphin Louis was in all respects the converse of his worthless father. Austerely moral, unselfish and conscientious, he spared no pains to fit himself for his high destinies. He united two characteristics which were not so discordant in the eighteenth century as to-day—a passion for military glory and a firm resolve to promote the happiness of his future subjects. He was very devout, and opposed the proscription of the Jesuits engineered by the Duc de Choiseul and Mme. de Pompadour. Rigidly excluded from affairs by paternal jealousy, he saw with acute

GOSSIP ABOUT DR. JOHNSON AND OTHERS

belonged to neither camp; he knew the Dauphin intimately and possessed excellent judgment. It is worth mentioning that he was a very neat draughtsman, and could draw and colour the interior of any room with its furniture in due perspective. He drew for me an accurate picture of the Dauphin's death-chamber in a few minutes.

distress the abyss for which France was heading, and died broken-hearted (Emanuel de Broglie, *Louis Dauphin de France*, 1877).

THE FRENCH COURT FROM
WITHIN



J. H. le Moyne inv.

H. Simon Sculp.

LOUIS XV.
LXV. Roy de France.

CHAPTER XI

THE FRENCH COURT FROM WITHIN,

1760-92

Louis XV in Council ; his eagerness to win at cards.—
Death of M. de Chauvelin.—Disgrace of Louvois
and of De Voyer.—Disloyalty of La Fayette.—
The Flight to Varennes.—Jarnac emigrates ; serves
at the Siege of Valenciennes.—Anecdotes of the *ancien
régime*.—Visit to Voltaire at Ferney.

LOUIS XV lost all conception of his
absolute power, even while presiding
in Council. He would suffer him-
self to be outvoted on important questions,
and then remark, " Well, gentlemen, that is
not *my* opinion." Such was his attitude in
discussing questions of finance ; he used to
protest that he would not risk his own money
on some scheme which had been adopted by a
majority of the Council, and had been known
to say, " I must have some money saved against

GOSSIP ABOUT DR. JOHNSON AND OTHERS

a time when I may be only Louis Bourbon.”

On the young Dauphin's (afterwards Louis XVI) expressing himself as an ardent advocate of philanthropy in the presence of his grandfather, the latter boxed his ears, saying, “ You little fool, you'll lose your crown one of these days, if you talk in this fashion ! ” *

Louis XV used to show an ill-bred eagerness to win at the card-table. Every courtier brought with him a long bag containing 600 to 1,000 louis d'or, and the King was often seen to leave the room with his pockets bulging and his hat full of gold. The death of M. de Chauvelin,† which occurred at one of these card-parties, was thus described by Count Jarnac : “ We were playing whist with the King ; Chauvelin and I had cut out, but he remained to answer a question of His

* It is a curious coincidence that the future King George III suffered the like at the hands of his grandfather, George II, at Kensington Palace, whence his dislike of that place.

† The Marquis de Chauvelin (1716-73) ; served with distinction in the war of the Austrian Succession, and successfully held Genoa during the Seven Years' War ; afterwards for many years Ambassador to the Sardinian Court.

THE FRENCH COURT FROM WITHIN

Majesty regarding the run of the cards. In order to do so, he leant over the table to examine those which had been last played, when to our horror we saw him reel and fall against the King's shoulder. The courtiers laid him on a sofa until a mattress was brought to carry him away. The King followed, to all appearance out of curiosity ; he watched his friend's gasps and struggles for breath without showing the least concern, and as poor Chauvelin drew his last breath he remarked with a shrug, ' Cela n'est pas bon ! ' ”

Instancing the effects of a King's petulance, Count Jarnac told me that, while Louis XIV and Louvois* were inspecting the progress of some buildings at Marli, the King complained that an angle of the façade under construction was out of the perpendicular, while Louvois, who held the office of Superintendent of Châteaux, insisted that the line was perfectly correct. Actual measurement proved

* F. M. le Tellier, Marquis de Louvois (1641-91), an able but unscrupulous minister.

that the royal vision was accurate, and Louvois fell into disgrace. On this occasion Louvois's daughter hit upon a plan for dispelling his chagrin—namely, by suggesting war with Holland as a diversion ; but the Minister was less fortunate a few years later, when a royal frown caused him to die broken-hearted. Another circumstance of the same description happened within Count Jarnac's knowledge at the Court of Louis XVI. M. de Voyer, son of the Marquis d'Argenson, held many lucrative offices, including that of superintendent of Posts. He lived in great style on the high road between Paris and Bordeaux, kept a large hunting-stable, and used to sell his cast hunters to people who provided travellers with post-horses. This service was consequently very ill-performed, and complaints were disregarded, unless they came from de Voyer's friends, or people of high rank. Louis XVI knew of the existence of this and many other abuses, but made no attempt to remedy them. One evening at Marli the King was changing

THE FRENCH COURT FROM WITHIN

his costume for supper in the presence of several courtiers, including de Voyer, when one of them complained of his persistent ill-luck at cards, whereon Louis bluntly accused him of being avaricious. Receiving a reply which somewhat checked his petulance, the King turned to de Voyer and said, "You, too, are greedy for money!" De Voyer in reply admitted that he valued money—"mais seulement comme moyen." Louis affected to interpret these words as referring to the practices which enabled de Voyer to gratify his avarice. "Means, indeed," said he, "you who are postmaster and all sorts of things!" Every one knew what the King implied, and silent consternation followed. News of de Voyer's disgrace flew like wildfire, and soon reached Count Jarnac, who was playing billiards with the Comte d'Artois. When the list of supper-guests was read out, de Voyer failed to present himself, and it was afterwards discovered that he had left the palace. He had shown conspicuous capacity as a

GOSSIP ABOUT DR. JOHNSON AND OTHERS

General, was especially kind to young officers, and Count Jarnac had many reasons to be grateful to him. He visited de Voyer about three months after the catastrophe at Marli, and found him seriously ill. In vain did Jarnac urge him to resign all his offices as a protest, which would make the King sensible of his discourtesy. De Voyer had not spirit enough to take so drastic a step, and within a few weeks he sunk into death !

The Revolution was in full swing at the beginning of October 1792, and La Fayette had embraced the popular side.* Learning that he intended to march to Versailles with 6,000 rabble-troops in order to bring the royal family to Paris, Count Jarnac sent Maréchal Beauvau, who commanded the Guards, a note running as follows : " Be on your guard, we are coming to visit you." He hoped

* M. J. Motier, Marquis de la Fayette (1757-1834), ranks among the Fathers of American Independence. At the outset of the Revolution he was commandant of the Paris National Guard. He emigrated after August 1793, but was detained as a prisoner at Olmutz until he was released under a clause of the Treaty of Campo Formio, 1797.

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that the King would take this warning as a hint to leave Versailles, but the latter's infatuation appeared in Beauvau's reply : " You are mistaken, we are coming to visit *you*." Count Jarnac, who had been running all over Paris to concert measures for protecting the royal family, awaited their arrival on the staircase of the Tuileries. The hideous procession drew up in the Carrousel at eventide on October 6, and the unfortunate family began to mount the stairs. Count Jarnac, being in *déshabillé* with very dirty boots, kept in the background, but Queen Marie Antoinette espied him and said, " O Count, you are here ? Come with us, we have need of all our friends." He followed them to the ante-chamber, and had great difficulty in keeping the mob at a distance. Madame Elizabeth * said, pointing to a little man who was winding a clock, " I am sure that that fellow would murder us this very night if he could ! "

* Princess Elizabeth (1764-94), sister of Louis XVI, had a charming disposition and was devoted to her brother ; she perished on the scaffold.

GOSSIP ABOUT DR. JOHNSON AND OTHERS

Count Jarnac held La Fayette in abhorrence on account of the part he played on October 6, 1792. He was entrusted with the custody of the Royal Family, and might easily have saved them from an ignominious captivity. He excused his inaction by affirming that he was asleep on the day in question. At its anniversary in 1797 La Fayette arrived at Hamburg after being released from imprisonment at Olmutz, and met with a cordial reception from the populace. He expected many congratulatory visits on the morrow, but no one came. The witty Prince de Ligne* had affixed a notice on the door of his ante-room, "M. de la Fayette is unable to receive visitors to-day, because he always sleeps from the 5th to the 6th of October."

When Louis XVI was stopped at Varennes, during his attempted flight from France, an army officer rode up to the royal berline and said, "Your Majesty is detained by a mere

* Charles Joseph, Prince de Ligne (1735-1814), distinguished himself as a General in the service of Austria; a brilliant conversationalist

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rabble ; with your permission I will cut a passage through them." Louis, still under the delusion that he and the Kingdom were one, replied, " No, no, not for me. I would not for all the world have a drop of blood shed on my account ! " Was this humanity, or dotage that cost many thousand lives ?

Count Jarnac used his utmost endeavours to be of service to the unhappy King, but found all his suggestions countered by other counsels, and by Louis's prejudices. He was convinced that nothing would be attempted against his person, and that nothing amiss could happen to France as long as he was safe. Finding the situation quite untenable, Count Jarnac obtained the King's permission to look after some concerns in Ireland. But the Reign of Terror set in ; Jarnac was a soldier, and longed to serve his Sovereign in the field. He applied for active service, and was attached to the staff of the Duke of York, who commanded the British forces operating against the republican army in Flanders. He told me

GOSSIP ABOUT DR. JOHNSON AND OTHERS

that the Commander-in-Chief showed courage approaching rashness at the siege of Valenciennes.* Attended by Count Jarnac he rode out one morning to inspect the advanced trenches, and came well within range of the enemy's guns. Jarnac, perceiving this, said, "Your Royal Highness's red coat is drawing fire ; let me advise you not to continue in this direction." "I came with the intention to take this way round," said the Duke, "and I'm not going to retreat for fear of a cannon ball !" At that moment a sentry, posted a few yards off, was struck by one, which Count Jarnac brought with him to England. He enjoyed a pension from the Government in reward for his services at this siege.

Before taking leave of this excellent man, I will repeat a few of the anecdotes which he told us during the winter of 1806-7.

* Valenciennes was taken 1793, after a siege of eighty-four days, by an English army under the Duke of York, the second and favourite son of George III. The campaign, however, failed, and France regained the fortress in 1794.

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Cartouche's* pretty face and carnation complexion enabled him to evade hot pursuit by dressing up as a girl. Thus disguised, he was engaged as a domestic by the *Tourière*, or female porter of the Abbey of *Nôtre Dame de bon Secours* in Paris. After working there for a month or so he sought an interview with the Abbess, who belonged to the Rohan-Chabot family, and told her that he was obliged to leave at once, adding, "Strange as it may seem, I am deeply interested in the fate of the highwayman Cartouche, who has lately been in jeopardy but is now safe." So saying he laid a letter on the table, with injunctions that it must not be opened until after his departure. It proved to be a safe-conduct for every member of the House of Rohan, signed "Cartouche !"

Two gentlemen were strolling together in Paris, when one of them said, "I'll bet you

* Bourguignon, *alias* "Cartouche," whose gang-robberies and genius for leadership have won a high place in the annals of crime, was broken on the wheel in Paris 1721, at the age of twenty-eight.

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anything you like that I will give that man walking in front of us a hearty kick without his resenting it." On his doing so the injured party turned round in astonishment. His aggressor said, " Oh, I beg a thousand pardons ; I took you for the Duc de Trémoille." Now, the said Duke was extremely handsome, and the victim of this practical joke quite the reverse. Gratified by the supposed mistake, he bowed, smiled and went his way.

Calonne's filial affection was carried to extreme lengths * ; he never travelled without a tin case containing the long hair which had been cut from his father's head after death. This was irrational but injured no one, which is more than can be said of Mme. Necker's death-bed injunction to her husband †—to have her body embalmed and kept in a glass

* N. de Calonne (1734-1802), Controller-General of Finance, 1785.

† Gibbon's first and only love; married the Finance Minister, Jacques Necker (1732-1805), and was the mother of Mme. de Staël.



Voltaire

Voltaire in old age from a chalk drawing by Thomas Woolidge.

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case. During her last illness she wrote about four hundred letters to her husband, purporting to come from the world of spirits, and arranged to have one sent him every month by a confidant. Her daughter, the famous Mme. de Staël, wasted all her blandishments on Count Jarnac, to induce him to adopt revolutionary principles !

During his service in the army Count Jarnac was obliged to attend the execution of a native of Languedoc for desertion. While being marched to the place appointed for his death, he called "Halt !" and on the Sergeant's asking the reason said, "That fellow is marching out of step !" A few minutes afterwards he again detained the escort while he fastened a smart silver shoe-buckle, which was coming off ; and faced the firing-party with a song on his lips.

In July 1763 Count Jarnac was stationed with his regiment at Sélestat, which is within easy distance of Ferney. He sent a message there, requesting permission to pay his respects

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to M. de Voltaire,* and received a reply expressing profound acknowledgments of the honour conferred, and an invitation to dinner. On the appointed day Count Jarnac drove to Ferney in his English carriage and pair, with his Second-in-Command and a friend. On arriving there about noon, they found Voltaire sitting by a blazing fire, although the weather was very sultry. He wore a rich brocade nightgown, an equally magnificent waistcoat, roll-up stockings and slippers, with a huge wig under an embroidered cap of blue velvet. His acknowledgments of the pleasure afforded by the visit failed to mask the quality of his temper. Complaints of his infirmities and sarcastic references to other people formed the staple of his conversation, and he wailed, " Ah, Monsieur, vous me traitez bien mieux

* F. M. Arouet de Voltaire (1694-1778), poet and man of letters ; had an immense influence on European thought and literature. In 1726 he was grossly insulted by the Chevalier de Rohan-Chabot, and retaliated by publishing a witty epigram. Rohan-Chabot's revenge was to have Voltaire severely beaten by hirelings. Refused redress by the authorities, he challenged his aggressor, and was promptly thrown into the Bastille.

THE FRENCH COURT FROM WITHIN

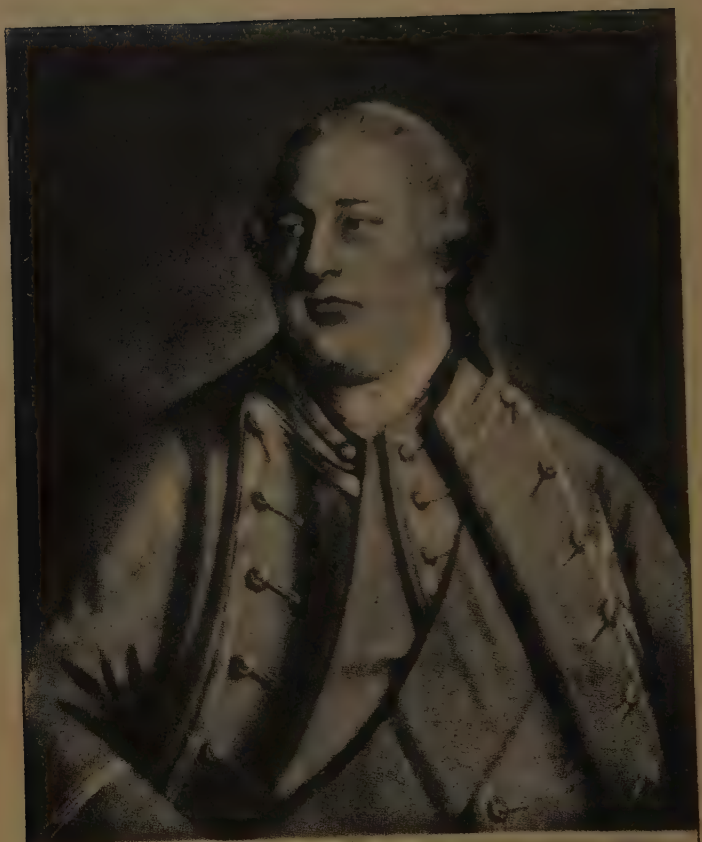
que M. votre père !” Count Jarnac was puzzled by this remark but subsequently found that his father had been concerned in a sentence of imprisonment suffered by Voltaire many years previously. He then uttered a series of querulous egotisms in continuous howls and attended by the oddest gesture—that of raising his elbows to his ears, and sawing the air with them—“ Ah, Monsieur, le vieux malade : vous voyez le vieux malade ! ”

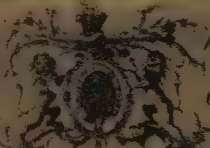
At half-past one Voltaire said that he must retire to dress ; it was not his usual custom but a mark of respect for his guests. He spoke of the lateness of the dinner-hour, and deplored the necessity of following the fashion of sitting down at two o'clock. In his absence they were left under the charge of Madame Denys, who seemed a very homely person, but a sharer in all the Châtelain's concerns. She talked incessantly of his writings, always using the plural—“ Quand nous avions fini le Mahomed,” etc.

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The party at table consisted of Voltaire, Mme. Denys, the three visitors and a most insipid young woman named Crébillon, whom Voltaire was ready to worship as a descendant of the famous writer. The fare was excellent, it included the delicate *ombre chevalier* from the Lake of Geneva. After dinner Voltaire led his guests through the kitchen garden to his intended place of burial, where he showed them a stone sarcophagus, with the soil excavated beneath, ready to receive his coffin. But the solemnity of the design was converted into puerility by Voltaire's boast that the tomb would not be required, as the public would not let him lie anywhere but in Paris. Count Jarnac said that this remark was prophetic.

LATER DAYS AT TWICKENHAM



His Royal Highness
Duke of

William Augustus
Cumberland

Painted and engraved by the Artists' Book & Print Store

CHAPTER XII

LATER DAYS AT TWICKENHAM

Mr. Samuel Tolfrey's arrival—A Singhalese on life in a British warship—A disagreeable Visitor.

A GREAT advantage of suburban life—in the right quarter—is that it affords the pleasures of society without the slavery of dissipation. To these attractions I owed the arrival at Twickenham of a friend who has consoled me for the loss of Count Jarnac—I allude to Mr. Samuel Tolfrey, who has accepted the dedication of a volume due to his inspiration.* After having filled the highest offices in Ceylon he was selected by the Government as guardian of

* The only Tolfrey in the *D.N.B.* is William (1778–1817), who fought in the Battle of Assaye, and was afterwards a revenue official in Ceylon. Probably a brother of Samuel.

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two young Singhalese of high rank, whom he received as inmates of a house rented by him in our neighbourhood. To Mr. Tolfrey I am indebted for an account of life on board a man-of-war, written by a Singhalese lad of fourteen who had never been at sea previously. He was given a passage from Ceylon to Bombay in H.M.S. *San Fiorenzo*, which had in tow the *Piedmontaise*, a French frigate which she had taken after a fierce encounter. It ran as follows :—

The ship in which we are travelling has forty-two guns pointed on both sides, and three masts, each of which is so thick that three men with joined hands cannot clasp it round ; to these masts innumerable ropes are attached, running in all directions. There is an anchor so heavy that two men cannot lift it up, and a smaller one besides. The crew consists of about three or four hundred men. There is a forge in the ship, and a place to pump water out and another to take in sea-water. Many artificers are at work ; some repair boats and some are blacksmiths ; tailors make and repair the sails, others twist ropes. Vast numbers of cartridges are suspended from beams overhead. Soldiers keep watch day and night, and sailors remain constantly at the top of the masts looking around them with a spying-glass, and give notice of anything they see, speaking through a trumpet. There are two men at the helm, looking at the compass continually. Others turn the sails to the side from which the wind comes. The quickness of

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the sailors is like lightning ; they climb up ropes to get to the top of the masts. They treat the French ship which they have in tow with great disrespect, for they will neither let her go before or stay behind ; she is dragged along by means of a cable fastened to our ship. In the battle our ship had a mast broken, and a shot went into the deck which broke the arm of one sailor, and both the arms of another. Very great was the loss sustained by the French ship ; she had three masts broken, her rudder and many of her timbers were shattered and many people killed. She had a very numerous crew ; but the English ship had not so many men. The French are not skilful, but the English are very quick and clever : owing to this they conquered. A few French prisoners have been put on board our ship : their condition is that of a jack all pent up by a flood on a small island. Every evening the drums are beaten ; and at the same time the crew are ranged in a line to be counted by inferior officers. The enjoyments of the sailors are eating, drinking and dancing. In this ship there is a bell.

Mr. Tolfrey, having filled an office of trust under Warren Hastings, was conversant with his disposition and private affairs.* He assured me that in no other man had he seen such great qualities of head and heart. Mr. Hastings's habits were very simple ; he drank no wine, and ate moderately of the plainest food. Had he lived for himself alone he

* Warren Hastings (1732-1818), Governor-General of India, resigned 1785. His abortive impeachment, which dragged on for seven years, was largely a political and party move. Edmund Burke took a leading part as manager, but the Hawkins family espoused Hastings's side.

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might have amassed great wealth, but he was very susceptible to female fascinations, and open handed in dealings with people who had the power of casting odium on his character. He had but one relative in India—a young army officer who fell during a desperate attack on the fortress of Gwalior.* Before starting, he wrote his will on a drum-head, and it was brought to the Governor-General after his death. Hastings showed it to Mr. Tolfrey, saying, “I have got a Grecian will here.” It was thus conceived :

Whereas I am appointed on the forlorn hope to storm the fort of Gwalior, from which service I may never return : and whereas I have left Calcutta deeply in debt, and have left two children and a third in expectancy, utterly unprovided for ; I hereby appoint Warren Hastings Esquire, Governor-General of India, my executor, desiring him to pay my debts, and provide for my family.

“And what do you mean to do ?” asked Mr. Tolfrey. “All that I am desired to do,” was the reply. It is unnecessary to add that all was done.

* Gwalior, belonging to Sindhia, was stormed by the H.E.I.C.’s forces in 1780.

LATER DAYS AT TWICKENHAM

It is well known that a majority of Mr. Hastings's colleagues on the Council combined to thwart him. A man who owed him £10,000 afterwards joined the opposing faction ; but even under this provocation, Mr. Hastings took no steps to recover the money. To Mr. Tolfrey's suggestion that he ought to sue the defaulter he replied, " I cannot do it ; he is my enemy ; I cannot do it ! "

I must now introduce a less agreeable visitor to Twickenham. He was a clergyman, but shirked the duties of his profession on the score of irritable nerves, and made a living by writing for " authors " who could not trust their own abilities. With this labourer in the literary field I had become acquainted in London, and, on hearing that he had been for a second time gazetted a bankrupt, I hastened to comfort his wife to whose charms of person, manners and conversation he was indebted for many staunch friendships. In the course of conversation I suggested a week's visit to us

at Twickenham, and my invitation was accepted with alacrity. On the appointed day I drove them to my house, which we reached in time for dinner, and delight in viewing the exquisite scenery, lit up by a summer sun, carried us tolerably through the meal. But I soon found that my guest was a most humoursome person, whom all the blandishments of his suffering wife failed to soothe. Before retiring for the night, I read prayers to our little household, whereupon he expressed pique for my disregard of his sacerdotal character, and asked me to leave such function to him in future. I endeavoured to comply next morning, but he refused to officiate, and never mentioned the subject again. He complained of being disturbed by two striking clocks, and ordered them to be stopped ; he said that our nine-o'clock breakfast involved too long a fast, and required tea to be served earlier in his bedroom. Then he complained that our dinner-hour interfered with his " classic walk " ; but when it was advanced to suit him, he exclaimed,

LATER DAYS AT TWICKENHAM

“ Oh dear, dear, *why* did you mind what I said? I don't want to take a walk.” On being offered pigeon-pie at dinner, he said, “ No, no, that's too bilious for me. I much prefer giblet pie.” When the hint was taken he said, “ Dear me, it's very hard that I can't say what I like ; well, give me some giblet pie, it's very nice, upon my word.” Our books were better appreciated ; he told us that he had sold his library, in the confidence that he would have the use of a friend's, and added, “ I intend that every one who knows me should give me a book ; now you have many that I covet. Leunclavius's *Xenophon*, for instance.” We were not geese enough to cackle to that tune !

While we were at breakfast one morning, our maid whispered that the fishmonger had called for orders. “ Let *me* see the fish,” said my guest, “ and choose what I like.” Let the reader imagine us standing near the well-filled tray : “ Take that pair of soles for me,” he said. “ Now you can buy anything you

please for the family.” I obeyed, and would have done so if he had ordered me to buy the tray itself, and serve it up with anchovy sauce ! The week’s visit was drawing to a close ; and weather favoured a river-trip to Richmond, where the beauty and fashion of the place used to meet every afternoon, and listen to a band of music.

Everything was ready for the excursion ; but just as we were starting, our guest began a harangue on the cruelty of taking him into a crowd, where every third person would know of his misfortune. I awaited the adjustment of the balance ; it stood at acquiescence, and we duly arrived at our trysting-place, to find that my guest’s fears of notoriety were quite groundless. On bidding us farewell he announced an intention of favouring us again at Christmas ; the interval, he said, would be filled up by visits to various friends who were clamouring for the distinction of showing kindness in adversity. At the festive season’s approach, I received a letter from him,

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expressing disappointment at not being asked, and fear that he had given offence. I returned a civil reply, but it contained no invitation, and he rejoined in a strain which needed repentance.

ANECDOTES

CHAPTER XIII

ANECDOTES

I NEVER heard my parents cast the slightest aspersion on the Duke of Cumberland,* but he was blamed in some quarters for his cruelty in dealing with the Scotch rebels. His generalship at Culloden was considered as retrieving his military reputation which was compromised by the loss of the Battle of Fontenoy. H.R.H., indeed, was a popular hero after the suppression of the

* William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland (1721-65), was the second son of George II. An ardent supporter of racing, he owned the famous horse "Eclipse." As Ranger of Windsor Great Park, he excavated Virginia Water, and obtained the materials of Holbein's glorious gateway at Whitehall for erection near that "Stupendous Lake." But funds running short, they were buried on the side of the Broad Walk in Windsor Great Park.

Rebellion, and was greatly beloved in his private character. While engaged in forming the stupendous lake in Windsor Great Park, he would never allow the labourers' wages to be in arrears. When funds were exhausted he used to tell them so, and assure them that they would receive a summons when more money was available.

Franks, the Jew diamond merchant, told my father that he was once summoned to the house of Lady Hardwicke, wife of the Lord Chancellor, and received in a very confidential manner by her. She said, "Mr. Franks, I want to make my daughter Anson a present of jewellery—something about £200." This transaction was soon settled, and then came the real business. "And can you tell me of any good match for one of my sons? But she must be rich, Mr. Franks, she must be rich!" Her daughter was, of course, the wife of Lord Anson.* It is now well known

* Admiral Lord Anson (1697–1762) returned 1744 after circumnavigating the world, with very rich prizes; married Lady Elizabeth Yorke, daughter of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke,

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that the account of the voyage round the world which was published under his name was written by some one wholly unconnected with the expedition. Mr. Cracherode, son of the Colonel of Marines who sailed in Anson's ship, told Sir John Hawkins that his father considered the narrative accurate in all respects save one. Urbanity is ascribed to Lord Anson who was an excellent seaman but destitute of good sense and good manners. I may add that Lord Hardwicke had a character for rapacity. George II told him that he had observed that Lord Hardwicke always had a friend for whom he asked for every vacant appointment.

On the death or retirement of one of the Barons of Exchequer the question of filling the vacancy was hotly debated in Council. King George II, who presided, put an end to the dispute by calling out in his broken English, "I will have none of dese ; gif me de man wid

1748. It is now known that the *Voyage Round the World*, published in that year, was virtually his work.

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de dying speech ! ”—meaning Mr. Adams,
Recorder of London, whose duty it was to
report death-sentences for the royal pleasure.
And so he became a Baron of Exchequer.

While Lord Ranelagh was Paymaster of
the Forces a serious deficit in his accounts
came to light. Some busybody told George II
that public money had been applied to the
Earl's building speculations in Chelsea. The
King repeated this to Lord Ranelagh who
replied, “ Will your Majesty be so good as to
tell the next person who says so that this is
impossible, for not a farthing of my com-
mitments in Chelsea has yet been paid ? ”

The friend at whose suggestion these
reminiscences were compiled * remembers the
rehearsal which took place in Westminster
Hall on the day before the Coronation of
George III. The Hall was lit up, and no
one was admitted except those who were to
take part in the ceremony and their friends.
My informant gained access to the scene

* He was Mr. Samuel Tolfrey (see preceding chapter).

through a window of an adjoining coffee-house which opened on a gallery whence he descended to the Hall, and mingled with the actors, undetected.* The King's champion, Dymoke, rode in between the Duke of Bedford, who was Lord High Constable for the nonce, and Lord Talbot representing the High Steward. He was mounted on the same horse that had run away with George II at the Battle of Dettingen. The King never rode it again ; he said, " A horse that carried me towards the enemy once may carry me to the rear another time ; he is not a fitting horse for a soldier." There were some ladies among the onlookers ; and the Duke of York explained the ceremonial to Lady Caroline Russell, afterwards Duchess of Marlborough, the reigning beauty of that time. Wishing to tell her that the horses would be caparisoned, he said, " They will wear things like petticoats."

During a visit paid by George III to

* George III and Queen Charlotte were crowned September 1761. In those days mean shops and coffee-houses disfigured the entrance to Westminster Hall.

Gloucester Cathedral, Dean Tucker thought fit to apologise for the "extreme clumsiness" of the columns supporting the arches of the nave. The King checked him, asking, "Have you measured them, Mr. Dean?" On learning that this had not been done, His Majesty said, "I should like to have them measured." He was obeyed, whereon the King said, "Come, come, Mr. Dean, you must not find fault with the columns, they are in exact proportions." It is generally known that George III made the plans for the Ranger's Lodge in the Green Park.*

A nobleman with whom George III was conversing at Weymouth stigmatised the business of a worthy tradesman of their acquaintance as "mean." The King interrupted him, saying, "Pooh, pooh, what does that signify? It is in the power of every respectable man to make the business in which he is engaged respectable."

* It was a domed building facing Down Street; when it was pulled down a pair of stone deer on either side of the entrance were removed to Albert Gate.

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After finishing his *History of Music*, my father obtained permission to dedicate it to George III, and present him with a copy. On the appointed day he took the volume, sumptuously bound, to the Queen's House,* where he had audience of the King and Queen. The presentation was duly made, and a conversation ensued on the subject of music in which Queen Charlotte took a lively part. His Majesty professed a decided preference for works of the Old School, and jestingly complained of his failure to persuade her of its superiority to modern productions. The Queen expressed dissatisfaction with the light airs to which some composers set sacred words for a choral service, and said that many anthems sung at the Chapel Royal were sadly lacking in decorum. She sang a few bars of one—I think it was Kent's "O Lord, our Governor"—in order to bring it to the King's recollection. Our amiable monarch then expressed keen appreciation of really fine music, and graciously

* Now Buckingham Palace.

closed the audience, which had lasted for upwards of an hour.

Sir Clifton Wintringham told a lady of my acquaintance that he was not in the least surprised on hearing of King George the Third's first mental attack. While in attendance many years previously, he ventured to express an opinion that His Majesty's neck was too tightly dressed.* His remonstrances were unheeded, and he felt that he could not repeat them without giving offence.

During the first illness (1788) of our good King George III, he was attended by Dr. Baillie, and recollecting the latter's nationality he said that he would give him some Scotch music. Sitting down at the piano provided for his amusement, the King played the air of the Jacobite song, "Over the Water to Charlie."

The sisters of young officers detailed for escort duty were really alarmed on account of the speed at which George III and Queen Charlotte habitually travelled. Their horses

* *I.e.* that His Majesty wore too tight a stock.

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often fell, whereon the royal coach had to pull up. When His Majesty heard that a horse was down, he would coolly remark, "That is what we are used to!" We often shuddered at the pace maintained by the cortège near Windsor; but the people delighted to see royalty tearing along the roads, and shouts of "God Save the King!" went up. The Sovereign of Great Britain had only to show himself in order to be adored.

Things were managed otherwise in France. An English nobleman who went to Versailles with a message of congratulation on the marriages of the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois with two Sardinian Princesses, was a spectator at one of the Royal family's public dinners. He noticed a large number of rolls of bread ranged on a shelf in the ante-chamber, and saw Louis XV, on entering it, take one down at random, and put it in his pocket. When he took his seat at table the King produced a gold-mounted knife and fork from a long side-pocket, and wiped them on a

napkin, as he did the plate he used at every course. It was never changed ; the reason for these precautions is obvious.

It is a pleasure to dwell on my recollections of Dr. Vincent * who adorned his profession and the literature of his country. I have been told on excellent authority that his promotion in the Church was stopped because some scandalmonger whispered to George III that he was in the habit of playing whist every evening. Seeing him at Court, Her Majesty asked with marked coldness, " Well, Mr. Dean, do you play cards as much as ever ? " Dr. Vincent had the presence of mind to answer, " I hope that whoever told your Majesty that I played cards also said that my eyes will not serve me to any other purpose by candle-light ! " He died as Dean of Westminster, but lives in the memory and affection of all who knew him.

Dr. Vincent was very fond of children,

* Dr. William Vincent (1739-1815), Headmaster, Westminster School, 1782-1802 ; Dean of Westminster, 1802. Cowper translated some of his Latin verses.

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and particularly so of a pretty little lass, the niece of a neighbour of his. While he was visiting this friend, Peggy, the darling of us all, ran into the room very full of a wonderful adventure. She had been taken by a relative to one of the "soup-shops" which had been opened as an experiment for the relief of the poor. Noticing a very delicate-looking child among the applicants for soup, Peggy engaged her in conversation, and accompanied her to a miserable lodging, where she found the child's parents desperately ill, and five little ones on the verge of starvation. Peggy procured immediate relief for this wretched family, and afterwards pleaded their cause before the Vestry, answering every question put to her with the utmost intrepidity. All this Peggy recounted to her friend the Dean, while her bright eyes brimmed over with tears. He at once set to work canvassing his friends on behalf of these poor creatures, collected nearly £200, which he applied to the best purposes and rendered accounts to every subscriber.

My father took great pleasure in conversing and transacting business with the Marquis of Rockingham * who had a decided taste for the fine arts. His lordship offered to bring him into Parliament free of expense to himself, but my father declined the honour, as he had previously done in response to a similar offer from Lord Rochford, Secretary of State. Lord Rockingham told my father that he brought from Turin the first Lombardy poplar seen in England, as a sapling tied to the pole of his travelling carriage. This tree soon became a general favourite, and was planted in places where a rapid growth of "screenery" was desired. It has become vulgarised, and is now treated with neglect as great as was the admiration it once excited.

In the course of a Chancery suit in which Richard Cromwell † was concerned, one of the

* Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquis of Rockingham (1730-82), Prime Minister in a Coalition Government, 1765-6, and again March 1782.

† Richard, third son of Oliver Cromwell (1626-1712), succeeded his father as Protector, 1658, but was practically deposed by the army, 1659, and retired to Paris. He

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counsel made a slighting reference to him, to the disgust of Lord Cowper * who was hearing the cause, and knew that the Protector's son must be a very old man, and was probably present. He looked round and asked whether Mr. Cromwell was in court, and on the latter's being pointed out, he said, "Mr. Cromwell, I fear you are very incommodiously placed; pray come and take a seat on the Bench by me." I need not add that nothing derogatory fell from counsel after this mark of respect. Bulstrode Whitelocke † said, "This day so many years ago I saw my father carry the Great Seal before that man in Westminster Hall."

Handel ‡ often did my father the honour

returned to England, 1680, and lived there unmolested till his death.

* William, 1st Earl Cowper, became the first Chancellor of the United Kingdom, 1707-10, and died 1723.

† Bulstrode Whitelocke (1605-75), barrister, took a prominent part in politics during the Protectorate, but escaped punishment at the Restoration.

‡ Georg Friederich Handel (1685-1759), a native of Saxony, settled in London 1710. His *Messiah* was first performed at Dublin, 1744. In Queen Victoria's sanctum, Windsor Castle, there stood his harpsichord, with all its keys hollowed out like spoons from incessant use.

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of trying new productions on his young ear. On calling one morning he was asked by the great composer to listen to the air, "See the Conquering Hero Comes!" After playing the novelty, Handel asked, "How do you like it?" My father replied, "Not so well as some other things of yours that I have heard," whereon Handel said, "Nor do I, but, young man, you will live to see that a greater favourite with the people than my other fine things." At a time when Handel's circumstances were less prosperous than they had been, he invited the painter Goupy* to dinner, warning him that the fare would be quite plain but the welcome would be as cordial as if he had been able to afford French cookery and claret. Goupy accepted, and the pair dined together frugally. Soon afterwards Handel left the room, and was so long absent that Goupy, for want of better employment, strolled into an adjoining room. Walking up to the window,

* Two painters of this name were contemporaries of Handel's—Lewis Goupy and his nephew Joseph.

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which looked diagonally into another apartment, he saw his host sitting at a table which was spread with the same delicacies as the latter had lamented his inability to provide ! Goupy was so angry that he left the house abruptly, and revenged the slight by publishing an engraving or etching in which Handel figured as a hog wallowing in dainties. But I will now relate a circumstance which is more consistent with the great composer's character ; it was told me by Dr. Allot, Dean of Raphoe, who is still happily with us. Some one questioned Handel as to his ideas and feelings while writing the grand " Hallelujah Chorus " ; he answered in his imperfect English, " I did think that I did see all Heaven before me ; and the Great God Himself."

Everything agreeable is connected with my recollection of Dr. Cooke,* organist of Westminster Abbey. He was one of the worthiest and best-tempered of men ; and although

* Dr. Benjamin Cooke (1734-93), organist of Westminster Abbey, 1762-93.

he had attained in youth a very high place in the musical profession he showed none of the evil results which often arise from early prosperity. Being rather taciturn in general society, or perhaps too modest to assert himself, his peculiar vein of humour was not recognised by acquaintances, but it was quite genuine. No one showed less pride on account of superior excellence ; I often heard him say, " Everybody could do what I have done if they would only try." While seated in the Abbey organ-loft he used to press any hand that might be useful into his service ; he would say to a lad who had strolled into the loft : " Now, young gentleman, come and help me here ! " If it was one of his choir-boys, he would say, " Come, come, don't stand idle, just put your hand under my arm here ! " Indeed, I have heard him declare, " These boys of mine learn from one another more than I can teach them." Dr. Cooke married early in life and was a most affectionate parent of his large family. His feelings were very tender ; he

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could never sing his part in the beautiful Highland lament, "Lochaber no more," without tears streaming down his cheeks. Wonderful was his patience with stupid people, and it was often sorely tried. In the course of a lesson in the violin given to a youth of noble birth, his pupil, a mere novice, passed over all the rests, and left the Doctor far behind him. "Stop, sir," said the former, "just take me with you!" The lad, instead of slackening speed, drawled out, "Aye, aye, it may be necessary for you who have to earn a living to mind such trifles; but I don't need to be so exact."

Dr. F——, Principal Medical Officer in the Canterbury Military District, gave me the following instance of Lord Nelson:

He saw the Admiral surrounded in his own ship by foreign attendants; he was writhing with disgust, hating them all, and clinging to his Yorkshire valet, Aaron by name, who had him under his thumb. After dinner one day, Nelson showed some annoyance at having a

common glass rummer set before him. Pushing it aside he said, "Aaron, I *will* have my silver cup : I will *not* have this glass !" Aaron merely replaced the rummer, saying, "Take that to-day ; the silver cup to-morrow" ; and Nelson submitted !

Mr. Cheselden,* Surgeon to Queen Caroline, in passing through an obscure country town, foregathered with a blacksmith who had gained great local renown for his successful operations for cataract. Pleased with the man's intelligence, Cheselden was at some pains in teaching him the proper methods. At a subsequent visit he inquired how his humble colleague was getting on. "Ah, sir," replied the blacksmith, "you have spoilt my trade ; I never dared to try again after you had explained what I had been doing."

Mr. Saxby of the Custom House used to frequent Rothwell's coffee-house in Covent Garden, which was in those days a rendezvous

* William Cheselden (1688-1752), Surgeon of St. George's Chelsea and St. Thomas's Hospitals ; invented the lateral operation for the stone.

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for people who loved argument. The conversation turned one evening on the profession of medicine, and Saxby remarked, "All I know of it is this—the ancients tried to make it a science and failed ; the moderns have tried to make a trade of it and have succeeded !"

On Humphrey Parsons, the great porter-brewer, becoming Lord Mayor of London, he was drawn in the State Coach on November 9 by six of his finest dray-horses. Now, when an empty butt is being hoisted up from a publican's cellar, the drayman calls out, "Sides all !" whereon the horses clear the butt, by turning to right and left. A wag in the crowd who knew this raised a hearty laugh by shouting a command which the Lord Mayor's gaily-caparisoned team promptly obeyed.

My father was on intimate terms with Lord Hardwicke's sons, and took great pleasure in their conversation. He once brought home from a dinner-party a story told him by Sir

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Joseph Yorke, afterwards Lord Dover,* regarding the intrepidity of a young girl whose office it was to feed the wild animals kept in the Tower of London. A ferocious tiger escaped from his cage and clambered to the top of a tiled roof close by. A council of war immediately assembled to discuss measures for killing or capturing him and, said Sir Joseph, "I, young-man-like, opined that he should be shot ; but this girl could not support the idea ; she begged an audience, and undertook to restore the animal to captivity. Leave being granted, she ascended the roof on which the tiger was crouching, and coaxed him back to his cage by leading the way thither and presenting his food."

The common people in Ireland have a natural politeness which is not often seen in the English lower orders. Some friends of mine, while stopping at an inn in a remote

* Joseph Yorke (1724-92), Ensign in the Foot Guards, 1741 ; A.D.C. to the Duke of Cumberland at the battles of Fontenoy and Culloden ; Ambassador at the Hague, 1761-80 ; created Baron Dover 1788.

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part of that island, asked a chambermaid how it happened that the house was full, seeing that it was not assize-time. She replied, "I suppose I ought not to say it's on account of the goodness of the house, so it must be on account of the goodness of the gentlemen." Yet this answer is not so charming as that of an English country-girl who was asked how she had acquired her very graceful deportment. "I doesn't hardly know," she said ; "I believe I got it by a-mocking of the corn."

Two gentlemen riding past a field either in Essex or Sussex—I forget which—saw three hulking rustics extended under a tree. "I wonder which of these men is the laziest," said one of the wayfarers. "Well," said the other, "I'll try," and holding out an apple, he shouted, "You fellows there ; here's an apple for any of you who will come to fetch it !" "Bring it to me," replied one. "Put it into my mouth," said the second ; and "Wag my jaws for me while I'm eating it," said the third.

The wife of a country doctor, conversing with a neighbour in her husband's dispensing-room, pointed to some physic-bottles on a shelf and said, " But we mind nothing except Bacca-dore medicines ; it's to them we trust " ; and she proceeded to explain that she meant the common drugs which were kept behind the dispensary door.

Mr. Bennet Langton told the late Countess of Waldegrave that he heard Edmund Burke exclaim, " How extraordinary to think that I, Lord Chatham and Lord Holland should each have a son superior to ourselves ! " *

The late Mr. George Hardinge had every qualification for a brilliant career at the Bar, except application and steadiness. His relative, the Marquess Camden,† admitted that Hardinge's talents were far superior to his own ; and yet he died in confinement for debt. Among his numerous creditors were Messrs.

* Burke idolised his only son, who predeceased him ; the great Earl of Chatham and Lord Holland were respectively fathers of William Pitt and of his antagonist, Charles James Fox.

† Charles Pratt, first Earl Camden (1714-94) ; Lord Chancellor, 1766.

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Triphook & Co., the booksellers, who addressed him thus :

“ To G. Harding, Esq., if living, and if dead, to his executors :

“ DEAR SIR OR SIRS,

“ Not having heard from you regarding our repeated applications for settling the enclosed account, we conclude that he must be dead, and if that melancholy circumstance is true, we beg for payment by his executors.”

Mr. Hardinge at once sent them the following reply :

Dear Messrs. Triphook, what is feared by you,
The melancholy circumstance, is true ;
For I am dead, and more afflicting still,
My legal assets will not meet your bill ;
For, oh, to name it I am broken-hearted,
This mortal life insolvent I departed !
So, gentlemen, I'm yours, without a farthing,
Signed (for executors and self), George Hardinge.

In September, 1817, I was shown over Lord Tankerville's beautiful gardens at Walton-on-Thames by a Scotch gardener who appeared to be a quiet, thoughtful man. After exhibiting

his lordship's magnificent herbarium he said, "If I were to turn my mind to these dead things, they would interest me greatly, but I am much fonder of my plants. A plant is like a child, it thrives or droops, grows and alters. You nurse it, you are anxious about it, and naturally love it. If it is sick, you are afraid it will die, and then, like an ailing child, it becomes all the dearer to you." In amazement at the knowledge this man showed in answering my queries, I said, "Why, gardener, you ought to read lectures here." "I ought to *hear* lectures," was his answer, which in itself and in his delivery would not have disgraced an ancient philosopher.

Lady Hawkins told me of a servant in her father's employ who often made him angry. Her mother desired her to be more attentive in future, adding, "You don't know what you make *me* suffer when you make your master angry." She answered, "You, Madam, are bound to bear it ; I am not !"

The late Sir Robert R—— lost his left

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arm under circumstances which he never chose to explain. The story was as follows : While he was with the army in Scotland, he seduced a young woman in an inferior station of life. Her brother vowed vengeance, and repeatedly challenged Sir Robert to mortal combat, all to no purpose. So the day before the Battle of Culloden he joined Sir Robert's regiment as a volunteer, and on its morrow he tracked his enemy to a situation from which there was no escape. "I fought for your country yesterday," he said, "and suppressed private revenge for the public good ; but now I insist on your meeting me !" Sir Robert shrank back in silence, whereon the Scot drew his claymore, struck off the latter's left hand, and said, "I have left you a right hand, and will still fight you with my left tied behind my back !" Needless to add, his challenge met with no acceptance.

Captain P—— of the Royal Navy once witnessed an instance of retributive justice which gave him the highest satisfaction.

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Passing along a street at Portsmouth, he saw a sailor and his doxy enter one of those shops which fit customers with attire from head to foot. Following them inside out of curiosity, he heard Jack Tar order the shopkeeper to dress his companion in the very best style. She was conducted to a parlour, whence she soon emerged looking very smart indeed. As the pair were leaving the shop, they were accosted by a miserable-looking beggar-woman who implored relief. The fine lady refused to give her a farthing, and uttered most insulting expressions. The sailor stood aghast at her brutality ; driving her back into the shop, he called the beggar in and insisted on Madam's changing clothes with her, and resuming her own rags. Then he gave the beggar some money, sent her away overflowing with gratitude and turned the object of his former bounty adrift.

Speaker Onslow,* hearing a gentleman

* Arthur Onslow (1691-1768), Speaker of the House of Commons from 1728 until 1761.

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who was on terms of intimacy with David Garrick describe his wonderful power on the stage, expressed regret that his own position was incompatible with theatre-going. "But surely," he continued, "the next time you visit Mr. Garrick at Hampton you might invite him to my house at Ember Court, and as you say he is a good-natured man, he might be prevailed upon to oblige me by enacting one of his famous characters." The friend undertook to negotiate with Garrick, who readily accepted an invitation to dine with the Speaker. After dinner Garrick asked his host what recitation he preferred, and after some debate the Grave-digger scene in *Macbeth* was fixed on. As the Speaker was profuse in his acknowledgments, he might have been supposed to appreciate the performance, had he not turned to his friend, while it was in full swing, with the question, uttered in audible tones, "Were you at the last turnpike meeting?"

It is curious to note the changes in public

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taste for literature. Fifty years ago Richardson's novels * were greatly praised by visitors to our house, and curtailed editions of *Clarissa* were placed in the hands of children. My parents thought otherwise ; they forbade me to read Richardson's writings on the score of his immorality thinly veiled by sentiment. A lady who has a long memory, and adds her mother's recollections to her own, told me that she had often heard the former say that the manners which Richardson assigned to his personages were no more those of the time when he wrote than they are of our own time ; and I have heard the same remark from other people.

* Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) was the author of three novels which had an immense vogue throughout Europe, but are now seldom read ; his *Clarissa Harlowe* appeared in 1740.

Undergraduate

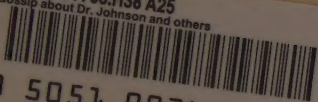
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Gossip about Dr. Johnson and others



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